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The Open University

Centre for Research in Education and Ed Technology (CREET)

# **Exploring an Exam-Practice Approach to Teaching Academic Reading and Writing in China: Teacher Perspectives and Materials Analysis**

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## **Doctorate in Education (EdD)**

**Matthew Andrew Terrett, BA (Hons), MEd**

**T5758160**

**28<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

# Abstract

This study explores teacher perceptions of an approach to teaching academic reading and writing that focuses on local English for Academic Purposes (EAP) exams (the Exam-Practice Approach) and presents a textual analysis of the teaching materials. The research context is the EAP component of an international foundation year programme for undergraduate students embarking on Business or Engineering pathways at a British university operating in China.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with English teachers and analysed thematically. This data was enhanced through participant observation, documentary evidence and a survey. Findings indicate concerns regarding the separation of academic reading and writing skills, and a mismatch between course aims and assessment. Contextual factors influencing the development of the local EAP programme are identified and concerns are raised over a perceived lack of purpose in teachers' professional roles.

Corpora were constructed from the reading input in the EAP materials divided according to the students' disciplinary studies (Business and Engineering) and a keyword analysis conducted using the British Academic Written English (BAWE) reference corpus. This was supported through the manual analysis of rhetorical functions in reading materials. Findings indicate that the reading input does not provide a coherent model of target situation writing and that the local academic reading materials contain language features that directly contradict local writing instruction.

The primary implication of the findings of this study for pedagogical and professional practice is that course assessment can greatly influence the development of an English for Academic Purposes programme. Focus on English-language test practice risks alienating teachers and reinforcing a deficit model of Chinese students. The purpose of the EAP programme therefore needs to be clear and assessment should reflect that purpose.

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Very big thanks to my parents, Andrew and Jackie Terrett, who rescued production of this thesis in its later stages by coming out to Shanghai as babysitters. And finally, thanks to my wife for being reasonably good about my *fuyaning* her during the writing of this thesis!

The data in this study come from the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus, which was developed at the Universities of Warwick, Reading and Oxford Brookes under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Sheena Gardner (formerly of the Centre for Applied Linguistics [previously called CELTE], Warwick), Paul Thompson (formerly of the Department of Applied Linguistics, Reading) and Paul Wickens (Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes), with funding from the ESRC (RES-000-23-0800).

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

## Commonly used in the Literature

AWL = Academic Word List

BAWE = British Academic Written English (corpus)

BEL = Basic Engineering List

EAP = English for Academic Purposes

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

EGAP = English for General Academic Purposes

ESAP = English for Specific Academic Purposes

ESL = English as a Second Language

GSL = General Service List

IELTS = International English Language Testing System

KWA = Key Word Analysis

KWIC = Key Word in Context

L1 = First Language

L2 = Second Language

NMET = National Matriculation English Test

RC = Reference Corpus

## Commonly used in the Local Research Context

AR = Academic Reading (component of EAP programme)

AW = Academic Writing (component of EAP programme)

BIZ = Business stream students (also defines corpus in this study)

DEED = Definition, Explanation, Example, Diagram (the rhetorical functions in an essay taught by Business faculty)

ENG = Engineering stream students (also defines corpus in this study)

HoD = Head of Department

IFY = International Foundation Year (the name of the programme before it became 'Year One')

LNT = Listening and Note-Taking (component of EAP programme)

SDS = Speaking and Discussion Skills (component of EAP programme)

UKHQ = Company's UK Headquarters or its representatives (pseudo-acronym for anonymity)

### **Specific to this Study**

BE-BAWE = BAWE corpus filtered for Business Studies and Economics texts

ENG-BAWE = BAWE corpus filtered for Engineering texts

EPA = Exam-Practice Approach

PO = Participant Observation

ptw = per thousand words (normalised corpus data)

RQ = Research Question

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to contribute to debate in EAP, drawing on work from academic literacies, genres studies, discourse studies and corpus linguistics. It explores an approach to teaching foundation level English for Academic Purposes (EAP) that consciously aimed to improve Chinese students' academic reading and writing skills through exam practice. Locally labelled the 'Exam-Practice Approach' (hereafter the EPA in this thesis), the reading and writing programmes are explored from teacher perspectives and through a textual analysis of the teaching materials. This chapter provides contextual information about my role as researcher and the institution in which this research was undertaken (a UK university operating in China) before presenting the research questions.

## 1.2 Research Rationale

This study developed from my professional attempts to make sense of the Exam-Practice Approach to teaching foundation level EAP in my institution. I was an academic reading and writing teacher on the foundation course that formed part of the first year programme of a UK degree pathway offered in Shanghai, China. From the start I was confused by the lack of coordination between the four EAP skills - writing, reading, listening and speaking - despite there being four 'skills coordinators'.

From my teacher's perspective, the Academic Reading (AR) course seemed to lack any purpose beyond basic comprehension skills and instead consisted of a series of International English language Testing System (IELTS) style test papers on a range of unconnected topics (Appendix 1), which the students could have completed by themselves. IELTS is an international English language test and reading materials used have therefore 'been selected for a non-specialist audience' and cover topics that are of 'general interest' (IELTS, 2013a). Thus the course reading content was unrelated to the students' second year choice of degree pathways (§1.3.3). The design and formatting of the AR materials was rather text-heavy and did not seem engaging. Some of the passages seemed *unacademic* in quality (e.g. opinion pieces without supporting data) but there was nothing to

indicate this on the worksheets that the students received. Concerned about the quality of the AR component, I applied for the position of AR Coordinator, but was appointed as Academic Writing Coordinator instead. From this new perspective, it became evident that the reading material covered in the Academic Reading class was of little use in meeting the Academic Writing (AW) syllabus requirements, and in some cases intuitively seemed to contradict locally established AW teaching content (e.g. rhetorical functions, the use of pronouns; discussed in §5.3). This meant that reading material intended for use in students' writing also had to be studied in the AW classes, raising time constraints issues. It proved difficult to better coordinate the Academic Reading and Academic Writing components because the Exam-Practice Approach focused on their differing respective EAP exams, which were similar to IELTS tests.

Several teachers raised concerns regarding the Exam-Practice Approach and the increasing workload for both teachers and students. Suggestions were being voiced as to how the programme could be improved. It was in this context that I began to document teachers' perceptions of the EPA and its academic reading and writing practices. The purpose of the research on which this thesis is based was to explore and document teacher perceptions of the EPA and its development in the local context at a time when it was undergoing challenges from alternative approaches, and to analyse AW and AR classroom texts to determine how far these correlate with teacher concerns.

This thesis is a record of this exploratory research journey, on which the EPA and its methods of assessment have been problematized. I list the research questions below but first provide an overview of the context of the study.

## **1.3 Research Context**

### **1.3.1. Chinese Cultural Context**

With a combined consumer and government expenditure on education in the region of £14 bn in 2011 (Goh, 2012:5), China has 'the world's largest education system with the largest number of learners of English' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:5). The Ministry of Education 'guesstimate that there are over 400 million English language learners in China' (Mainland, Hong Kong and Macau) with over 50,000

'ELT organizations offering English language training' (Goh, 2012:9). Universities in China are part of the rapid expansion and marketization of education over the last fifteen years and this has raised challenges for teaching and learning (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:6-7). The identified challenges include: large university institutions with large numbers of students (estimated to be over 20 million tertiary-level students in Jin & Cortazzi, 2006), the admission of lower achieving self-funding students and shortages of expert teachers; Confucian heritage and values are also often considered to influence Chinese education (p.6-12). It is important to note that whilst the term 'Chinese' can refer to a relatively homogenous shared linguistic and cultural heritage (p.9), 'it is dangerous to generalise about the cultural behaviour of a social group, especially a society as huge and complex as the Chinese one' (Hu, 2002:96). It is therefore necessary to consider what is understood by 'Chinese' and to acknowledge that the 'extent to which Chinese-ness is shared across regions, urban/rural settings, and family background cannot be taken for granted' (Gieve & Clark, 2005:264). This section presents features of the Chinese cultural context of relevance to this thesis that have been generally discussed in the literature.

Given the potentially enormous differences in socio-cultural background, convenient labels such as 'the Chinese learner' may be misleadingly simplistic, giving 'individual learners a restrictive social identity as a homogenised representative of a national culture' (Clark & Gieve, 2006:56). The danger is that:

The teacher may come to the conclusion that individual views do not, in fact, exist, and that he or she is dealing with a somewhat anonymous group of non-thinking students. (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:6)

This deficit view, which positions "Chinese learners' [as] a caricature of rote-learning, memorization and passivity' (Kennedy, 2002:430) has been challenged, for example:

...assumptions, such as the notion that memorization and understanding are mutually exclusive categories, may be in need of reappraisal...to go beyond the self-fulfilling prophecies and

Memorisation is clearly needed for rote learning, but memorisation and rote learning are not the same. In China '[t]ext memorization and imitation are methods many successful English learners extensively use and regard as effective' (Ding, 2007:278). Memorisation may help learners internalise language features, and enhance their ability to notice how these are used (Ding, 2007:279), which can lead to higher fluency and reading automaticity 'without being slowed down by attentional word-recognition demands' (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:291). Nevertheless, as Kennedy (2002) observes, the view that Chinese students 'have to be weaned off 'inferior' or 'old-fashioned' modes of learning onto 'deeper' ways of understanding' (p.442) still persists, even though memorisation as a technique for test preparation 'is certainly not restricted to the Chinese tradition, but rather is an inevitable consequence of the testing process' (Wray & Pegg, 2005:195). This raises the issue of test washback - the intended or unintended impact that an exam or test has on teaching and learning for its own preparation (Qi, 2005:143-144) - which is highly significant because '[g]etting a good grade or passing an examination is an overriding motivation in courses for most students' (Wang, 2008:636). Further details of the impact of test washback in the Chinese context are provided in sections 2.3 and 2.4.

In China the source of knowledge has traditionally been perceived to reside in written texts, giving rise to 'the centrality of textbooks found in Chinese classrooms' (Hu, 2002:97/8). Gu (2010) points out that a 'single textbook...helps in producing unified and integrated learning experiences' and '[a]t university level, the importance of the teacher, the book, modelling, mimicking and memorizing is still evident' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:11). This poses a potential problem in Chinese university contexts because the shortage of expert staff in high-demand subjects such as English (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:6) and the tendency for inexperienced teachers to over-rely on textbooks (Harwood, 2014:12) means the textbook may be given even greater authority. However, a textbook cannot simply be assumed to be a reliable authority on EAP. Indeed, 'the unsoundness of most [EAP] textbooks outweighs many, if not all, of the benefits textbooks can confer' (Harwood, 2005:158). In particular, EAP '[t]extbooks are found to understate the



enormous disciplinary variation in style and language which corpora reveal...[and] writers rely far too much on intuition or folk beliefs when attempting to describe academic discourse norms' (Harwood, 2005:150). This suggests that viewing a textbook as authoritative in lieu of teacher experience could lead to potentially misleading EAP instruction.

Political restrictions may raise challenges for learners with mainland China school backgrounds who aim to study in non-Chinese institutions, leading Cross & Hitchcock (2007) to claim:

schools, colleges and universities in the PRC use textbooks and syllabuses created by the Education Ministry and approved by the Communist Party...the continuing preoccupation with Confucianism...means that...too little consideration is given to this important political dimension. (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:3)

Discussion of certain socio-political topics in class remains taboo (see Bamman, O'Connor & Smith, 2012 for examples of sensitive and censored words) and high-profile reminders of the consequences are published in the media (e.g. the recent arrest of a Beijing professor: <http://english.people.com.cn/90882/8522118.html>). School children on the Chinese mainland are not encouraged to challenge authority and the teaching process remains teacher-dominated, including transmission of traditional moral virtues such as loyalty, modesty and conformity (e.g. Hu, 2002:97-98). Whether or not such virtues stand in contradistinction to 'critical thinking', practice in expressing disagreement with authority is almost certainly absent from such students' writing repertoire. It can therefore be reasonably assumed that they will need considerable scaffolding in this endeavour when being prepared for learning in UK higher education where importance is attributed to 'evaluating the purpose and status of texts, and responding to them in an appropriate way' (Alexander, Argent & Spencer, 2008:122). It may also be useful to draw a distinction between 'the Chinese learner', whose nationality and first language (L1) background is not indicated, and 'the learner from China', who can be assumed to have been through the Chinese Communist Party's approved educational system and to be familiar with Mandarin in educational contexts even if it is not strictly speaking his/her mother tongue. Thus, the student's background

educational context is emphasised over his/her culture or ethnicity (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5).

'Despite its tremendous achievements in higher learning and scholarship the Chinese did not develop institutions recognizable as universities until the 1890s' (Gow, 2011) and the earliest universities in the country were developed by Western missionaries. Given this history, it might be expected that Chinese academic writing shares many rhetorical and structural similarities with English academic writing. Comparative studies show 'that contemporary Chinese textbooks on composition introduce students to a compositional style which reflects the Anglo-American rhetorical style more than the traditional Chinese...[and] that Chinese writing is shifting its emphasis from reader-responsible to writer-responsible rhetoric' (Loi, 2010:268). That is to say, moving from an inexplicit style necessitating 'a very high degree of shared contextual knowledge' (Qi & Liu, 2007:148) between writer and reader, to a direct and explicit style of writing where 'the presumption of shared knowledge is severely constrained' (p.150). Liu and Furneaux (2014:91-92) found that Chinese EFL students took a direct approach in both their English and Chinese writing but rhetorical differences remained. Among the most notable differences in academic contexts include the observations that Chinese writers use fewer citations, 'do not usually discuss the limitations of specific past research [or take]...a strong critical stance' (Loi, 2010:275), which is consistent with the political avoidance of challenging authority.

Since academic English and Chinese share a degree of similarity in generic patterns of textual organisation, the teaching of rhetorical organisation of texts may be less important in EAP classes than encouraging students to critically evaluate the reading materials with which they are presented and to teach them how to appropriately express their criticism in their writing. This is not, however, typical practice in China and the 'teaching of academic writing in Chinese universities tends to focus on general discourse-level features...while the more micro, form-focused knowledge and skills are comparatively underexplored' (Lee & Chen, 2009:281). Despite this reported focus on discourse-level features, it cannot simply be assumed that students have mastered the ability to organise texts appropriately in English. For example, in a study of thirty English essays written by

non-English major postgraduate students in China, it was found that one third suffered from unclear organisation at the level of the paragraph and that nearly two thirds relied on the rhetorical use of 'idiom, analogy, sayings, expressions of wisdom, and so on' (Qi & Liu, 2007:149). Most importantly, it cannot be assumed that students coming from Chinese high school will have had exposure to academic texts in either language. Nor can it be assumed that they have been taught to distinguish academic genres (see §2.6) from the more traditional Chinese rhetorical patterns, such as 'a background-before-main-point presentation of ideas' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:18), the 'four-step essay composition' (起承转合 or qi-cheng-zhuan-he) and the 'eight-legged essay' (八股文 or ba-gu-wen) (Loi, 2010:268). They may also have been introduced to the framework of the five-paragraph essay - a 'dominant school practice' (Brannon et al, 2008:16) - especially perhaps where they have attended IELTS test preparation classes (see §2.4).

Social literacy practices in the popular media may also influence the literacy values and expectations of Chinese students. For example, Chinese fashion magazines make 'much use of conversational idioms which formerly would not have been used in writing' (van Leeuwen, 2005a:158). Numerous English words are used with which readers are familiar and 'trendiness is almost synonymous with the English language' (p.156). These trends, however, are not a one-way process with Chinese simply following popular English. Indeed, 'market reform has been accompanied by a revitalization of traditional forms in China...even in popular culture texts imported from the USA' (p.153), using, for example, classical Chinese poetic devices. Students may therefore have confused preconceptions about the kinds of language that is valued in English writing and the extent to which their L1 and L2 are directly transferable. They will likely need specific instruction to help them identify the appropriate language to use for academic purposes. This is especially important as advances in communications technology expose students to an increasing range of modalities and genres 'in this time of SMSing and "tweeting"...[challenging] beliefs about what "literacy" is' (Hamp-Lyons, 2011:3). Digital channels of communication are blurring the distinction between written and spoken texts on the one hand (discussed in §2.11), and the relationship between text producer-consumer on the other. Lin and Li (2014:60)

claim that young people aged 18-30 account for approximately 75% of the more than 800 million mobile internet users in China, of whom the majority use multimedia mobile instant messaging services (e.g. QQ or WeChat).

The key features of teaching and learning English in the Chinese university cultural context involve tensions related to the expansion and marketization of tertiary education as well as tensions between communicative approaches to language learning and the continuing influence of more traditional Chinese methods of learning English. Data collected from 733 questionnaires and ten interviews of secondary school teachers across ten Chinese provinces indicates that Chinese English teachers are influenced by both:

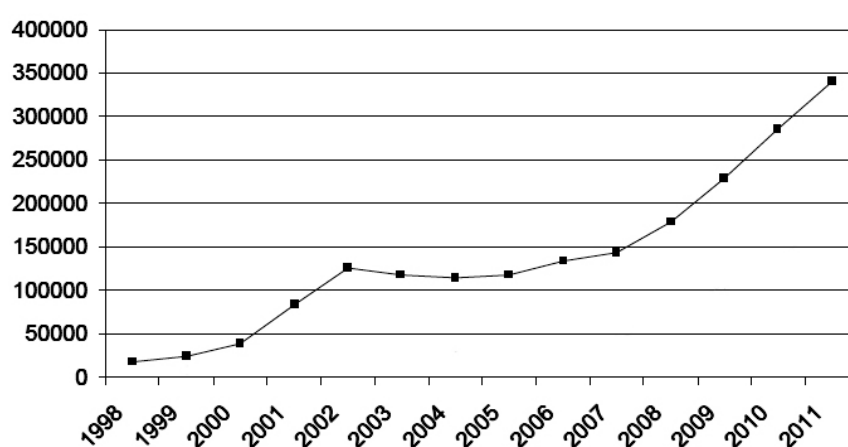
the constructivism-oriented approach, which promises to help develop students' communicative ability...[and] such traditional beliefs and practices as teacher-centred and textbook-based instruction, focus on grammar and language form, recitation and imitation, drill and practice, and teacher authority. (Zhang & Liu, 2014:200)

Thus, there are tensions operating within Chinese high schools between a student-centred dialogic Western view of education, in which students are encouraged to ask questions and challenge the ideas teachers put forward, and the more traditional teacher-centred Chinese system, in which learning is linear and little value is ascribed to collaboration or creativity (see Holmes, 2005:291-292; Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:2). One of the most significant examples of traditional learning methods, memorization is not necessarily problematic but it becomes problematic where the language features that are memorised are not appropriate for the social purposes to which it is applied (discussed in sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.7). Accessing appropriate models of English for academic purposes may be a challenge for students in China due to misleading information from *gaokao* exam washback (§2.3); over-reliance on textbooks; political constraints; misleading notions of English literacy values promoted in the Chinese popular media. Thus, these cultural features are relevant to pre-undergraduate EAP provision for Chinese students.

### 1.3.2. Foundation EAP and Learners from China

The numbers of Chinese students heading overseas has continued to grow and reached 350,000 in 2011 (Figure 1.1), contributing to the ‘massive expansion in higher education...worldwide’ (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:3). Chinese students are by far the largest group of international students studying at higher education institutions in the UK (UKCISA, 2013). There were 78,715 from China studying at UK universities and colleges in 2011-2012 (UKCISA, 2013) and the country is ‘forecast to remain [a] major source of outbound mobile students’ (British Council, 2013).

Figure 1.1- Number of Chinese students going abroad



Source: adapted from Goh (2012:18)

There are a wide range of potentially contradictory reasons for this trend, including but not limited to: the view that ‘overseas university credentials are endowed with varied significance and values’ (Wang, 2012:10); overseas tertiary education may be seen as prioritizing learning over qualifications; obtaining degrees from prestigious universities to facilitate career progression; or simply as an exit strategy from difficulties experienced in the Chinese educational system (Wang, 2012:9-10). Shortages of university places in mainland China and criticism of traditional practices have also been cited (Bodycott, 2009:358-9). Perhaps the ‘exit strategy’ is the most relevant motivation in the present study where ‘[o]verseas education is constructed to be able to offer an alternative, easier, and safer route to reach [the] university goal’ (Wang, 2012:9). This notion is discussed in relation to the students in the current research context below (§1.3.7).

Difficulties and challenges can arise in Western university contexts because these 'Chinese students bring with them their own culture of learning, socializing, communicating, and being that interfaces - with varying degrees of mismatch - with the culture of the Western host countries' (Holmes, 2005:289-290). With the expansion and globalization of tertiary education, the 'sudden influx of a large cohort of students from a part of the world where a somewhat different educational philosophy currently holds sway' (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:19) has led to frustration in host institutions and 'the not uncommon perception of students from China as a liability rather than an asset' (p.7). For example, in the New Zealand context, Holmes (2005) observed that the 'communication patterns Chinese [students] brought with them from their first culture learning environment were largely contested in the host culture' (p.306). The limited opportunities for classroom interaction in the Chinese educational context mean such students are not 'prepared for, nor familiar with, the communication skills and practices' (Holmes, 2005:306) common to Western educational contexts. There is a danger that such observations and reported frustrations reinforce the deficit view of Chinese learners (discussed in §1.3.1 and 2.2).

Cross and Hitchcock (2007) warn 'against the constant problematizing of students from China, insisting that difference is not necessarily equivalent to deficit' (p.7) and argue that 'the increasing internationalization of education, both within the UK and worldwide, may well mean that confronting and overcoming potential philosophical dissonance will soon become the norm rather than the exception' (p.19). Indeed, Holmes (2005:309) points out that host teachers and students need to foster ways of improving intercultural communication in the classroom, hinting at re-evaluating Western approaches to accommodate international differences, what Cross and Hitchcock (2007:5) call the 'modification response'. Such a response is unlikely in the short term as it challenges 'a great deal of that which underpins much, if not all, UK HE study and research' (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5). Therefore, while modification processes are being negotiated, the 'intervention response', whereby 'international students are provided with assistance to...make the adjustments to their approaches to study' (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5), is likely to remain the dominant approach to foundation year EAP provision.

It is therefore hardly surprising that there has been a rapid increase in the English language courses aimed at foundation level students in China. Since 'early 2012, a large number of independent colleges have been granted their own degree awarding power...[but], to date, no central list of independent colleges with degree awarding power has been published by the Ministry of Education' (Evans, 2012). Not only is English language education big business in China, but the UK is second only to the USA in its involvement in the industry (Goh, 2012:10). Furthermore, the capacity of UK universities to teach students abroad is seen as a 'great British export industry' (Willetts, 2012). Thus there are commercial pressures from both the UK and within China promoting UK education as well as socio-cultural pressures within China ensuring a steady supply of large numbers of Chinese students aiming to study at English-medium universities. The institutional context for the research on which this thesis is based reflects such pressures.

### 1.3.3. The Institution: China Campus

The research context is an EAP department delivering EAP support to students on the first two years of a UK degree pathway at an educational institution (hereafter China Campus) in Shanghai, China. The structure of the degree pathways is 2+2 which means that students complete the first two years at China Campus and can then choose whether to complete the final two years at the same institution or to move to one of nine partner universities in the UK. China Campus is licensed to offer full UK university degrees in China but this license is dependent on the local host Chinese university. The China Campus management is non-Chinese and operates entirely independently of the license-holding host university, which plays no managerial or operational role except where legal constraints limit the particular degree subjects that can be offered. Thus, references to management in this thesis always indicate the expatriate management. China Campus is a licensed, UK-operated channel for partner UK universities to run their undergraduate programmes (the third and fourth years) and to award their university degrees. There is an organisation with its headquarters in the UK (hereafter UKHQ) that represents the partner universities and operates the Year One and Year Two programmes.

During the period of data collection (2010-2011), there were only two other educational institutions in China that were licensed to award UK bachelor degrees,

each operated by only one UK partner university. China Campus can be considered to be unique in that it directly serves multiple partner UK universities. All three institutions are located in the same Eastern region of China and many of the EAP teachers had social or professional links with more than one of them, through former employment or IELTS examiner networks.

This study focuses on the Year One foundation programme, which consists of a central EAP component run alongside other component courses including Maths and either Business and Economics (BIZ) or Physics (ENG). It is the same foundation year programme as that run in other UKHQ-operated centres and their partners in China and it is from such a centre that China Campus developed. The institution was in its 5th year of operation at the commencement of my data collection period (2010) and had undergone a period of rapid development. This development was in part accelerated by business considerations, that is the enlargement of the institution and the student body meant the operating company could be sold at a higher price.

Competition for financial resources is obviously a challenge for all academic institutions to varying degrees and tension between consumer culture and education is clearly not unique to the specific research context of this thesis (it was raised, for example, at the 'ESP in Asia 2nd Annual Conference', 2010). Concerns have been raised that the commercialisation of education runs the serious risk of reducing the social value of qualifications that 'no longer represent... either education or competency' (McArdle-Clinton, 2008:5). Given the scale of the education industry and the large number of English learners, such concerns may be particularly acute in China. Industry insiders report that whilst 'Chinese students and parents always say they care about quality, they have no idea how to measure it' (Melcher, 2010). The reliance on university rankings and brand awareness can allow unscrupulous agents to use aggressive marketing to exploit parents who often attach extremely high value to the education of their (often sole) child. This value is expressed in economic terms and '[a] survey conducted in 2001 by China's National Bureau of Statistics showed that more than 60 per cent of Chinese families invest one-third of their income in their children's education' (Bodycott, 2009:353). The tension between commercialization and education is a serious issue for institutions like China Campus where UK university education is



promoted as an industry both in the UK and China. In addition to commercial pressures, the rapid development of this institution occurred in response to the need to provide a place on a UK degree programme for students from the UKHQ-operated centres throughout China who had been guaranteed such a placement but who had failed to achieve the grades required for entry to the UK. These two factors, commercial and the fulfillment of guarantees, ensured that the students (discussed below) were typically inadequately prepared academically for enrolment at university, a fact that was acknowledged by UKHQ. Hence the foundation programme that occupied the first year of study at the institution was intended to function as an 'intervention response' (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5; discussed in §1.3.2).

The UKHQ-operated centres no longer had responsibility for their students once they had graduated and moved on to the partner universities in the UK, or failed and moved to China Campus. Due to the 2+2 format of the degree pathways at China Campus, however, there was concern for the students' progress beyond their Year One foundation studies. This presented a major challenge for EAP managers/teachers because there were no established methods or models for coping with this student body (described in §1.3.7). The EAP department was unable to select institutionally specific conventions to teach (as the other UK degree awarding universities operating in China might do) because there were nine partners to choose from. The difficulties in constructing an appropriate EAP programme may have been exacerbated by the fact that the majority of teachers and departmental managers were new to the EAP field.

The institutional factors and constraints discussed above had a marked impact on the development of the Exam-Practice Approach. The transition from UKHQ centre to a fully operating university was hampered, for those working in the context, by relatively unclear academic and pedagogical frameworks. The decisions governing the EPA tended to be based on individual managers/coordinators' personal and intuitive interpretations of the UKHQ EAP syllabus. Although informal professional feedback on aspects of the programme existed (skills meetings with the coordinators at the end of an academic year), at the time of the research discussed here (see Table 1.2 in §1.3.4) there had been

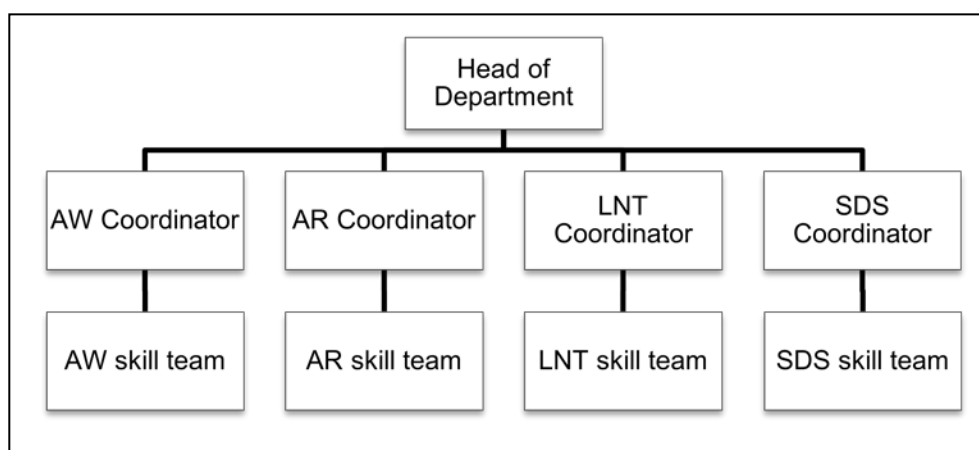
no formal systematic evaluation of the EPA reading and writing pedagogical practices in this context.

It is also worth noting that the technological resources were very limited. EAP classrooms were equipped with a whiteboard and tables and chairs for the students. Only subject lecture rooms were equipped with computers and projectors. Although two rooms were equipped with interactive whiteboards in 2010, these were not available for AR or AW lessons.

#### 1.3.4. The EPA Programme

When I arrived at China Campus (August 2008), the EPA management consisted of a Head of Department, who liaised with the local Academic Director and the remote EAP subject leader in the UKHQ. Below the Head of Department were four local 'skills coordinators' and the EAP teachers were loosely assigned to one or two 'skills teams' under the direction of these skills coordinators, usually Academic Writing and one other. The programme was divided into four distinct 'skills' - Academic Writing (AW), Academic Reading (AR), Listening and Note-taking (LNT), and Seminar and Discussion Skills (SDS) - each under the management of one 'skill coordinator'. In reality, the title 'coordinator' was a misnomer and the four skills were developed as four distinct programmes that were largely unrelated both to each other and the subject (BIZ or ENG) components of the Year One programme.

Figure 1.2 - Hierarchy of EPA management



Of the four skills, AW was allocated the most classroom time with three teaching periods per week (partly because the assessed portfolio work discussed below

was also undertaken in these classes). The AR and LNT skills were allocated two teaching periods each and one teaching period was given to SDS. Teachers had around 18 contact hours per week, teaching two or three AW classes and several classes of one other EAP skill. For much of the time period discussed in this thesis, some teachers were teaching a greater number of classes which were paid as overtime. The Head of Department and the four coordinators taught fewer classes because time was allocated for materials development, lesson observations and management of the skills teams.

**Table 1.1 - Allocation of EPA teaching hours by skill component**

EAP skill	Number of classroom periods per week
AW	3*
AR	2
LNT	2
SDS	1
Total EAP	8
*The number of AW periods was raised to four per week during the 2009-2010 academic year, with the extra class specifically allocated to the portfolio. Note: information regarding teaching periods for students' subject classes is provided in §1.3.6	

During the period of data collection for this study, the EAP department and programme was on the threshold of great change. It became increasingly clear that the development of the EPA programme was influenced by local power struggles and political tensions that went beyond pedagogical concerns. A formal meeting was called between the principal and all EAP teaching and administrative staff (2010) and it became evident that macro-management (managers above the level of Head of Department in the China Campus hierarchy) had serious concerns regarding the performance of the EAP department. Following this meeting, local political struggles became overt and various bottom-up and top-down pressures on the EAP management eventually culminated in the macro-managers replacing the Head of Department and the coordinators (2011), with the latter being rebranded as 'course developer' positions which were later phased out.

The focus of this thesis is the Exam-Practice Approach that was initiated during the 2007-2008 academic year and lasted for two full academic years before being disbanded halfway through the 2010-2011 academic year to be replaced by an EAP programme based on a course-book supplemented with an ESAP component

(Table 1.2). The research questions this thesis seeks to answer (see §1.4) are also mapped onto Table 1.2. Research Question 1 is concerned with the development of the EPA (2006-2008), especially the contextual factors that led to the changes in 2008. Research Questions 2 and 3 focus on the features of EPA itself, and are therefore concerned with the academic years from 2008 to 2011. The data collection period covered the 2009-2010 academic year through to the first semester of the 2011-2012 post-EPA programme (shaded grey in Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2 - Timeline of developments at China Campus**

	Academic Year	Macro-management	EAP Management Structure	Structure of EAP programme	EAP reading & writing Materials
RQ 1	2006-2007	Established as company's HQ in China.	Head of EAP, (new) teachers One off-site coordinator	Pre-EPA & ESAP	Reading book & External coordinator's AW materials + ESAP
	2007-2008	Sold to US company	Head of EAP, (informal) coordinator, 2 ESAP coordinators	Pre-EPA & ESAP	Reading book & External coordinator's AW materials (supplemented with internally created materials) + ESAP
RQs 2 & 3	2008-2009	Operated by US company, then split	Head of EAP, 4 Skills coordinators (AW, AR, LNT, SDS), Head of Year Two (EAP)	EPA	IELTS practice tests (AR), Internally created AW materials
	2009-2010	Present principal; years 3-4 established	Head of EAP, Head of Year One (EAP), 4 Skills coordinators (AW, AR, LNT, SDS), Head of Year Two (EAP)	EPA	IELTS practice tests (AR), Internally created AW materials
	2010-2011	Years 3-4 fully operational	Head of EAP, other management positions unclear	EPA (one semester), Transition period (second semester)	IELTS practice tests (AR), Internally created AW materials
	2011-2012		Head of EAP, Deputy Head of EAP, 4 EAP Course Developers	Post-EPA	<i>EAP Now!</i> (Cox & Hill, 2011) book + ESAP
Note: although the EPA only operated for two and a half years, it was developed in response to contextual influences during the pre-EPA and was not fully replaced until the start of the post-EPA programme so actually experienced a five year developmental history. The grey shading shows the period of data collection in China Campus.					

The label 'Exam-Practice Approach' clearly indicates the impact of gate-keeping assessment on the teaching curriculum and it is probable that other similar programmes might experience such washback (discussed in §2.3 and 2.4). Therefore, the findings presented in this thesis may be more generally applicable

to the international foundation year industry in China beyond the immediate research context.

#### 1.3.5. EPA Materials

The AR materials were mostly taken directly from IELTS practice websites and the AW materials adapted from academic writing textbooks in the department, notably *Writing Academic English* (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). Decisions as to which materials would be used and in which order were made by the four skills coordinators and materials editing was undertaken by teachers assigned to the skills teams under each coordinator. Figure 1.3 contains a sample that is typical of the EPA reading materials (original size was A4), which were received by the students as black and white photocopies. The volume of materials from the AW and AR components of the Year One course numbered around 70 different texts of varying lengths. A more detailed breakdown of the materials is provided in 3.6.

Figure 1.3 - Sample AR passage

*ACADEMIC READING Year 1 - Term 1, week 8a*

1 Like people, buildings get sick. When they do, the people inside them also get sick. They suffer from coughs, colds, wheezes, skin rashes, sickness, tiredness, headaches, eye troubles. They work slowly and inefficiently. They stay away from work. In a typical case in a large London office block, about 25 years old, staff complained about constant tiredness and lack of natural light. The complaints dragged on for years. A survey in 1987 found that 80 per cent of British office workers suffered sickness related to the buildings in which they worked. Tiredness was cited by 57 per cent, followed by stuffy nose, dry throat and headaches.

2 The trouble is the difficulty of knowing whether it is the people who are sick, or suffering from hysteria, or whether something has gone seriously wrong with the place they work in. A professor of design analysis at Cornell University gives the example of a building in Anchorage, Alaska, where three women, all heavy smokers, developed bronchitis. One of them was advised to wear a mask to work. The reaction of her colleagues led to an evacuation of the building, an investigation by consultants wearing full protective clothing, newspaper reports, and many lawyers. No cause was ever found. On the other hand, he also cites the example of the headquarters of the US Environmental Protection Agency where 70 people fell ill. The outbreak was traced to 4PC, a chemical produced by the interaction between adhesive and foam backing on new carpets.

3 The United States Institute for Occupational Health investigates about 50 buildings a year. These are mainly energy-efficient "tight" buildings which save money by using recycled warmed air rather than cold air from outside. They are usually open-plan or "deep" offices, where daylight has been replaced by artificial lighting. Thirdly, they are offices dominated, of course, by the data processor.

4 What goes wrong? For a start, the whole place can be at the wrong temperature, usually too warm. A four degree rise above a comfortable 20C can half productivity. It is almost certainly too dry, with a relative humidity below 40 per cent, resulting in stuffy and stale air. Equally certainly, the air is dirty: too many people still smoke, and smoke containing ammonia, formaldehyde, phenols and hydrogen cyanide is breathed by nonsmokers. Gases are given off by synthetic carpets and furniture. Ozone is produced by malfunctioning photocopiers.

5 The lighting may be all wrong. Low-frequency fluorescent lights produce a flicker which the eye cannot see but the brain can. It causes anxiety and headaches. Medical studies have shown that headaches are less frequent on higher floors which receive more natural light. Headaches fall by half when high-frequency lights are introduced. If you wanted a building not to work in, it would be air-conditioned, dusty, date from the mid-seventies, have tinted and sealed windows, and house batteries of clerical workers.

6 The trouble may lie less in the building itself, and more in the design of the workplace and the jobs that people are expected to do. The office worker has become more like a factory worker, tied to a work station in an assembly line. You can introduce full spectrum lighting and you can litter the office with spider plants to eat the carbon monoxide, but the central problem remains. The modern office has been built to house machines, not people.

7 The new technology creates a prison, and people go "prison crazy". An occupational health specialist says: "If you are trying to get the best out of your equipment, then the easiest thing is to chain your operator to the chair. Everything in the working environment is geared to keeping people working. Restaurants are close by. You can carry out food. People even come round selling sandwiches at the work station. But you are wringing the sponge dry, allowing it no time to recover.

Attributed source: <http://englishspeaker.com>

(Note: many of the AR papers were direct copies of the multiple choice reading tests available on this website)

**Figure 1.4 - Sample of AR tasks**

*ACADEMIC READING Year 1 - Term 1, week 4a*

**Ideas**

Select the answer which is most accurate according to the information given in the passage

1 A strict vegetarian

- a) rarely eats animal products.
- b) sometimes eats eggs.
- c) never eats any animal products.
- d) never eats protein.

2 We feel weak when we go without meat and other animal products

- a) because we are reducing our food intake.
- b) because we do not get enough protein.
- c) because vegetables do not contain protein.
- d) unless we take plenty of exercise.

3 Proteins are built up from

- a) approximately twenty different foods.
- b) about twenty different vegetables.
- c) various fats and sugars.
- d) about twenty different amino-acids.

4 Physiologically, life-long vegetarianism may not be good because

- a) it makes people very thin.
- b) the body must process too much waste.
- c) the farmers lose money.
- d) vitamin-deficiency diseases may result.

5 One thing in favour of vegetarianism is that

- a) vegetable food is easier to digest.
- b) animal food is less expensive.
- c) vegetable food is cheaper.
- d) it is good for the digestion.

Original source: Mosback & Mosback (1977)

Although the materials were nominally divided into BIZ and ENG, in practice most of them were provided for both disciplinary groups of students. There was no direct relationship to either subject area in terms of topic content except in the support material for the assessed coursework assignment, which had developed from a UKHQ-directed assignment that was double-marked (once by a subject teacher and once by an EAP teacher). The AW coursework assessment remained a UKHQ requirement throughout the duration of the EPA and the supporting coursework materials continued to be linked to the students' subject studies. This possibly represented a residual element of the ESAP component (an optional component in the UKHQ syllabus) that had formed part of the EAP programme

when the institution was founded (2006) before being dropped in the development of the EPA (Table 1.2).

Since the Exam-Practice Approach intentionally targeted the EAP exams, it is important to understand the EAP gatekeeping assessments. The assessments and the allocation of marks are listed in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3 - Allocation of marks in EAP assessments**

EAP Skill	Component	% of final EAP grade
AW	x 2 coursework assignments	20%
	AW Exam	10%
AR	AR Exam	10%
LNT	x 2 Listening tests	10%
	LNT Exam	10%
SDS	Presentation	10%
	SDS Exam	10%
(theoretically) all four skills	Academic Portfolio	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>


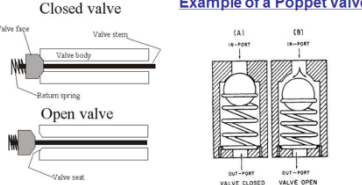


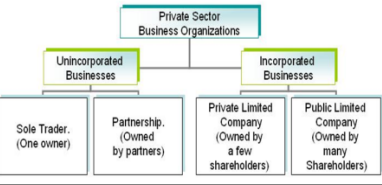
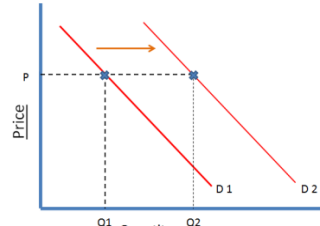
The AR and AW exams were based on the IELTS format. The AR exam consisted of three reading passages with associated comprehension questions that were predominantly multiple-choice, matching headings or sentence completion (see IELTS, 2013a for more details). The AW exam consisted of two parts - a *Use of English* section (grammar and vocabulary tests) and an essay that was essentially the same as an IELTS task 2 writing task; that is to write around 250 words in response to a point of view, argument or problem ( IELTS, 2013b). The portfolio was a collection of work completed in preparation for other assessments and independent work that the student had undertaken. Table 1.3 shows that the AW exam and coursework assignments contributed 30% of the total EAP grade (50% including the portfolio which was also taught in the AW classes). The AW exam therefore represented one third of the AW assessment. The AR component was 100% exam-based and contributed only 10% to the total EAP grade.

#### 1.3.6. Subject Studies

Although there was limited integration between EAP and other Year One components, it is useful to briefly examine the kinds of literacy practices that students would have encountered in their subject (disciplinary) studies.



Figure 1.5 – Sample of ENG and BIZ PowerPoint slides

ENG PowerPoint Slides	BIZ PowerPoint Slides
<p><b>Mechanical Engineering</b>      <b>Electrical Engineering</b></p>  <p><b>Computer Engineering</b>      <b>Electronic Engineering</b></p> <p><b>Control Engineering</b></p> <p><b>Open loop System</b></p> <p>Input → <b>Function</b> → Output</p> <p><b>Closed loop System</b></p> <p>Input → <b>Function</b> → Output      Output → <b>Information</b> → <b>Feedback Loop</b> → Input</p> <p><b>On-Off Valves</b></p> <p>These open with a minimum flow pressure</p> <p><b>Example of a Poppet Valve</b></p>  <p><b>Hydraulic and Pneumatic Actuators</b>      Pages 160 – 164 Bolton</p>  <p>Example of Hydraulic Actuator</p>	<p><b>Infinite Wants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People desire to consume goods and services</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This desire is unlimited</li> </ul> <p><b>Normative Statements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contain a value statement</li> <li>Is a statement which shows opinion</li> <li>Often normative statements are used in economics to indicate whether something is desirable or undesirable</li> <li>Example: The company has done a good job of improving their pollution record              This is a subjective statement</li> </ul> <p><b>Different Forms of Business Organisations</b></p> <p>PRIVATE SECTOR business organisations are owned, financed and controlled by private people (not the government).</p>  <p><b>Types of business organisation</b></p> <p>The 4 MAIN types of business organisation in the <b>private sector</b> are:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Sole Trader</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 owner – provides all of the <b>capital</b> (capital is the money used to start the business)</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Partnership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 – 20 partners provide capital</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>These two are categorized as <b>UNINCORPORATED BUSINESSES</b>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Private Limited Company</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>owned by a small number of <b>shareholders</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Public Limited Company</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>owned by a large number of <b>shareholders</b></li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>These two are categorized as <b>INCORPORATED BUSINESSES</b>.</p> <p><b>Shifting Demand Curve</b></p> 
<p>Note: ENG samples from Year Two PowerPoint slides because I was unable to access slides from Year One.</p> <p>Source: China Campus School of Engineering</p>	<p>Source: China Campus School of Business and Communication</p>

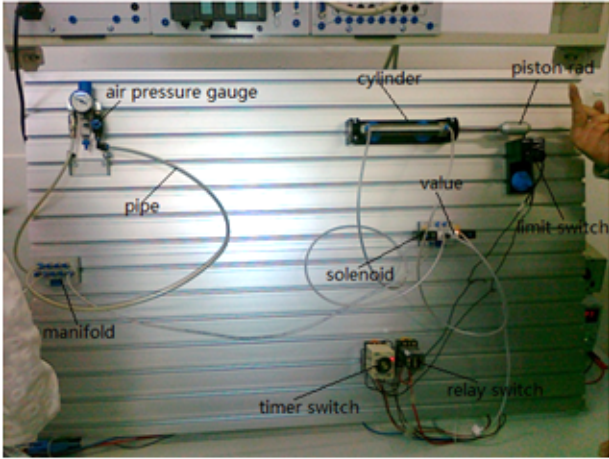
Students attended four (BIZ) or five (ENG) hours of classes in their disciplines per week. These included both lectures and tutorials. Lectures consisted of a teacher-centred presentation using *PowerPoint* slides, and photocopies of the *PowerPoint* slides were sometimes given to students as hand-outs. These often consisted of visual aids in the form of bulleted lists, diagrams, pictures and graphical data (Figure 1.5). Timetabled BIZ tutorials included exercises based on that week's lectures to test student understanding and answer student questions on the topic. ENG tutorials took place in the laboratory and were intended as opportunities for students to engage in practical experiments. In addition, both pathways received four hours per week of mathematics, including one hour lesson on Information Communication Technology, and for BIZ students this included statistics.

The ENG slides are almost exclusively of the *visual + labels* format (Figure 1.5). The BIZ slides consist of roughly equal amounts of bulleted lists (e.g. *Normative Statements* in Figure 1.5) and various images, graphs and diagrams. It is also worth noting that discussions of normative and subjective (and other kinds of) statements is something that could readily be supported in EAP classrooms.

In addition to encountering highly visualised *PowerPoint* slides (Figure 1.5), both BIZ and ENG students were expected to use forms of visual data in their assignments. The BIZ teachers taught a Definition, Explanation, Example, *Diagram* (DEED) structure for written work in their subject (discussed in §4.4 & 5.3) and the ENG students were encouraged to use photographs and diagrams to help explain their laboratory experiments. Examples of the latter can be seen in Figure 1.6.

Figure 1.6 - Writing samples: students' Engineering lab report

Process

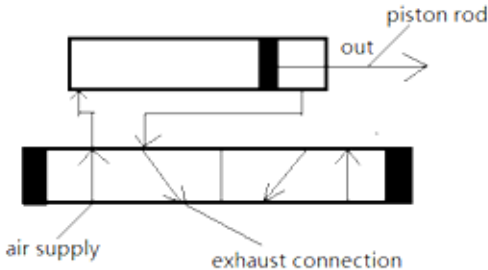


According to this picture above, this experiment can be divided into 3 phases.

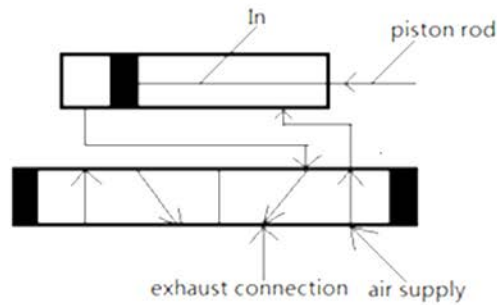
Firstly, into the manifold, connecting the cylinder and control exercise.

Secondly, into the manifold as well as connect valve.

Thirdly, with the clock and power control the entire system.



In this diagram, it is easily to see the solenoid has 2 positions and 4 ports. It can be seen from the above that when the air supply increasing, the piston rod of Cylinder will move out. And then the air will through the exhaust connection to emit.



In this diagram, it is shown that the piston rod is moving in. When the supply of air enters the solenoid, the piston rod is moving right. Then the air will always flow through the exhaust connection to emit.



Air Pump



Cylinder



Limit Switch



Solenoid Valve

Permission for use was granted by students

### 1.3.7. The Students

During the period of data collection (2010-2011), the student body was almost entirely comprised of mainland Chinese students. In Year One this was just short of 1000 students. Their ages ranged from 18-21 and they hailed from all parts of mainland China. Most would therefore have completed their secondary studies at a Chinese high-school, although a few students in each academic year transferred from other UKHQ centres or similar foundation programmes in China. They were

all full time college students aiming to pursue a bachelor degree, in either Business (BIZ) or Engineering (ENG), through one of the partner UK universities. In addition to the division along disciplinary lines, the mainland Chinese students are divided into two groups: *Gaokao* and *non-Gaokao*. *Gaokao* (lit. 'tall test') refers to the Chinese University Entry Test, including the English component (NMET), and the students designated *gaokao* had passed the exam and earned entry to the Chinese host university. They were studying the UKHQ programme as an additional degree alongside their Chinese major in a related field through the host university (i.e. they would be awarded both a Chinese and a UK degree). They were not fee-paying students and their presence on the programme was part of the contract with the license-holding host university. These *gaokao* students made up less than a quarter of the student body and were grouped separately from the other students. They followed the same Year One programme as their non-*gaokao* counterparts but were expected to move through the teaching materials more quickly and, as a consequence, a body of supplementary EAP teaching material had been generated by teachers. The non-*gaokao*, who represented the majority of the student body, had failed to achieve the *gaokao* score required to enter the host university. In other words, their academic record was inadequate to allow them to undertake a university degree in their first language (L1). This meant that, unlike the *gaokao* students, these non-*gaokao* students pursued their university studies only in their second language (L2).

This waiving of *gaokao* as an entrance requirement opened up access to students from families who would have traditionally been excluded, perhaps due to *hukou* (permanent household residency) issues for example. The ability to finance one's studies became the admission criteria - 'affordable for the new rich and a rapidly expanding 'middle-class' of about 5% of the population' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:8). These "self-funding' students might, academically, be considered in a second rank since their results are lower' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:7), which is consistent with the motivational factors to attend English-medium universities cited in §1.3.2. It is these non-*gaokao* students, representing a diversity of Chinese backgrounds, who are the focus of this study. Such students from traditionally excluded socio-cultural backgrounds are likely to need more teacher and institutional support in becoming acculturated to a university environment, especially a foreign one.

Alexander and Argent (2010:1) suggest the 'minimum level of competence in the language before being allowed onto EAP courses...tends to be set around IELTS 4/4.5'. EAP teachers working in the China Campus context were certainly aware of the relatively low English proficiency of the students (§4.2.4), but it is important to highlight that it was not just a language weakness that was an issue. High school study for the *gaokao* includes Chinese, mathematics and options in the sciences or humanities, not just English language proficiency, and there is variation in content between the science and humanities pathways, and assessments even differ from region to region (Australian Education International, 2011:27). Thus, the term 'non-*gaokao*' denotes a student who has not met the required standards for Chinese university entrance across the range of high school subjects and there may be variations in the academic content to which such students have been exposed.

An *ESL Gazette* article describing the profile of 'low level Chinese EAP students' (Argent, 2011:10) indicates characteristics similar to the non-*gaokao* group, suggesting similar groups of students have been identified beyond this current research context. This is consistent with my own experience as a teacher and that reported by a great number of teacher and IELTS examiner peers in the region. Writing in an institutional context where students had attained a *gaokao* score that met the entry standards of Chinese universities, Ballance (2012:149) suggests that the numbers of EAP learners with academic skills and expected levels of language proficiency, motivation and maturity are not the norm. The difficulties are likely to be multiplied for the non-*gaokao* students in China Campus.

This contrasts strongly with the characteristics of the so-called 'typical' Chinese students of earlier decades who 'had high ability and were motivated' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:18). Jin and Cortazzi (2006) describe a 'visible aspect of self-study [that] can be seen on many university campuses' (p.11) which seems to be completely absent in the local context. The personal experience of many local EAP teachers is that many non-*gaokao* students seem reluctant to engage in learning behaviours at all. A view held is that the students seem to regard attendance alone as sufficient for study, an attitude that is reinforced by the fact that attendance, or lack thereof, is the only factor that could prompt disciplinary intervention from the higher management. Perhaps it is this lack of awareness of

the workload expected of them that underpins Jin and Cortazzi's (2006:18) comment that the term "hard-work' may [now] have a wider meaning', and there is undoubtedly a major difference between EAP teachers' and many non-*gaokao* students' interpretations of hard-work.

It is also worth briefly considering the motivation for these non-*gaokao* students to attempt to study at tertiary level in English. It is possible that wealthy parents are exploiting the low entrance standards so that their yet to be sufficiently independent offspring have somewhere to go that does not negatively impact on the families' 'face' (public status or prestige as interpreted within the system of traditional Chinese socio-cultural values). In Chinese culture, face includes protecting one's public image to avoid bringing shame on the family and face can be gained through the conspicuous consumption of relatively high status products (Lin, Xi & Lueptow, 2013:538) such as an international education. Wang (2012:9) offers an example of a mother who, '[f]eeling dismayed by [her] son's worsening school performance and pressured by friends who compare their children's academic rankings, ...sends him overseas hoping that he will obtain a not-too-bad university degree.' The financial power of some students can put pressure on teachers to let students pass tests, a phenomenon that has received public attention in China (e.g. Liu's (2011) *Global Times* report 'Begging for a better grade a sad, shameless show'). This may have an impact on teachers' perceptions of their professional role, especially in overtly commercialised educational conditions, where:

the aims of students and administrators coalesce but are opposite to the aims of lecturers. The goals of many students, to obtain a qualification with the least possible effort, commitment and input, are in line with the goals of administrators who need to have as many qualified "outputs" as possible in order to garner maximum funding. (McArdle-Clinton, 2008:5)

These commercial-educational tensions are not specific to the local or even the Chinese context and I will not explore this issue any further here. However, it does foreground the tensions surrounding the inclusion of this traditionally excluded but financially empowered student group in the China Campus context.

## 1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

The overarching aim of the study on which this thesis is based was to explore the development of the Exam-Practice Approach, to document teacher perspectives on the approach and to explore what an analysis of the reading and writing input materials reveal about their lexis and functional purpose. The four main research questions of the study and which are the focus of this thesis are:

1. What key contextual factors did teachers perceive as influencing the development of the Exam-Practice Approach?
2. What are the views of teachers and managers of the Exam-Practice Approach to teaching academic reading and writing?
3. What does an analysis of the Exam-Practice Approach reading and writing input materials reveal about their lexis and functional purposes?
  - a) How relevant is the vocabulary encountered in the Exam-Practice Approach materials to target situation (academic discipline) writing?
  - b) To what extent is the language taught in the academic writing class encountered in the academic reading material?
4. What does a combined analysis of answers to RQs 2 and 3 reveal about the nature, purpose and potential limitations of the Exam-Practice Approach?

Questions 1 and 2 were explored through semi-structured interviews, documentary data (e.g. emails, institutional literature), and participant observation. Question 3 was explored through corpus data (RQ3a & b) and manual analysis of the rhetorical functions of Academic Reading texts (RQ3b). It should be noted that analysis relating to RQ3a is limited to consideration of target situation writing (not reading) due to difficulties in the construction of an appropriate reading corpus (3.6). Question 4 is explored through my own participatory reflective interpretation of the findings in RQs 2 and 3 and is presented in Chapter 6.



Before outlining the methodology I used for exploring these RQs, in the next chapter I review the literature that informed my study.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on teaching reading and writing as English for Academic Purposes (EAP). It covers seven key areas of direct relevance to this thesis: the relationship between Academic Literacy, EAP and the Exam-Practice Approach (EPA); the issues surrounding IELTS as an assessment tool indicating academic reading and writing ability in English; the argument for subject-specificity in EAP including the notion of genre; debates around what constitute academic reading and vocabulary; the value of corpus linguistics; and the need to take account of multimodality. The chapter closes with a summary indicating how the concepts in the literature relate to issues in the China Campus context.

### 2.2 Academic Literacy, EAP and EPA

'Academic literacies research has developed... as a significant field of study that draws on a number of disciplinary fields and subfields' (Lillis & Scott, 2008:5). The term *academic literacy/ies* needs defining because it is used to refer to a wide range of phenomena related to EAP: reading and writing, numeracy, digital literacy, information literacy, d/Discourse and language (Liebowitz, 2010; see §3.5.1 for discussion on d/Discourse), as well as genre awareness and pedagogies (Hyland, 2007). *Academic literacies* is also a technical label that represents 'a specific epistemological and ideological approach towards academic writing and communication' (Lillis & Scott, 2008:13) that acknowledges social practices and power relations involved in the production and interpretation of texts as well as the texts themselves. The academic literacies model challenges the 'deficit model' (reduction of the student to a problem that needs fixing, see §1.3.1 and Brannon et al, 2008:17-18) and builds on the *study skills* (literacy as an individual cognitive skill, independent of context and thus transferable to different contexts) and *academic socialization* (acculturation into discipline-specific ways of communicating knowledge) models by 'paying particular attention to the relationships of power, authority, meaning making, and identity that are implicit in the use of literacy practices within specific institutional settings' (Lea & Street, 2006:370). By opening up a focus on the social power relations embedded in

textual conventions to student critique (Wingate & Tribble, 2012:484), there is overlap between the academic literacies model and the aims of Critical Discourse Analysis, where researchers aim to increase consciousness ‘ of the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power... [as] the first step towards emancipation’ (Fairclough, 2001:1). Although this critical stance means that the academic literacies model may be viewed as being in opposition to writing instruction that only focuses student attention on established conventions, the approach is not necessarily at odds with Genre-based EAP approaches (Wingate & Tribble, 2012; discussed further in §2.5). This idea that academic literacies and Genre-based EAP approaches are not mutually exclusive or even necessarily oppositional is the epistemological approach adopted in this thesis.

The concept of academic literacies becomes important where the production or interpretation of a text occurs within a social framework that involves an academic purpose. Production and interpretation of socially meaningful academic texts requires knowledge of the linguistic features that readers and writers in the academic disciplines expect and deem to be socially appropriate. These linguistic features operate at various levels and include the notion of genre (see §2.6), rhetorical functions (relationships between ideas operating at the paragraph level (Alexander et al, 2008:48), see §3.6.5) and *lexicogrammar* - systems of words and their arrangement (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks & Yallop, 2001:6). Visualizing language as a lexicogrammatical system is useful as it clearly indicates the perspective that although grammar and lexis ‘have traditionally been kept apart, both in language pedagogy and in linguistic theory, [they] are in fact inseparable’ (Römer, 2009:140). The important point is that accepting the concept of academic literacies allows us to assume that in teaching EAP, there must be explicit attention given to both the social purpose that makes a text academic, and how that purpose is encoded in the lexicogrammatical features to construct an identifiable genre.

It therefore seems reasonable to assume that an EAP teacher would expect EAP teaching materials to include an academic ‘purpose’, especially since ‘[t]he EAP context is well-researched and...can be based on notions, functions and genres that are relevant’ (Alexander & Argent, 2010:2). This may seem obvious and self-

evident given that this meaning is contained in the very label *English for Academic Purposes*, but a major motivation for my study is the fact that academic purposes are not always foregrounded or even clear on EAP courses. There are, in fact, continuing debates in the literature as to whether EAP instruction should be based on English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) or English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), with the latter arguing for disciplinary-specificity (discussed in §2.6 and 2.9). In this sense, the Exam-Practice Approach programme at China Campus can be considered to be *general* rather than *specific* due to the range of reading topic content that is not related to the students' disciplines (Appendix 1). Whilst there is continued debate on the issue of EGAP or ESAP (§2.6), the separation of academic reading and writing in the China Campus context is curious because a fundamental feature of academic purpose is that '[r]eading...is linked with writing' (Jordan, 1997:143). Indeed, Coxhead and Byrd (2007:133) argue that '[a]cademic writing does not exist as a task on its own but is inextricably linked to the reading of academic texts.' Furthermore, '[o]ne of the most consistent implications of two decades of reading and writing relations is that they should be taught together and that the combination of both literacy skills enhances learning in all areas' (Grabe, 2001:157). Therefore, to reflect the distinct academic reading and writing programmes in the research context, for the remainder of this thesis I use *Academic Reading (AR)* and *Academic Writing (AW)* to refer to those components of the EPA.

The use of the plural 'literacies' follows Street's (2003a) emphasis on making the plurality of literacy explicit for strategic reasons to foreground the tension between different models of literacy and destabilise the 'dominant assumption...of a single autonomous literacy' (p.80). Whilst use of the plural has been contested as unnecessary (Kress, 1997), it is useful in the research context presented in this thesis in Street's (2003a) strategic sense to highlight the different kinds of texts students are expected to interpret and produce in both their disciplines and in preparation for their EAP exams (see sections 1.3.5, 1.3.6 and 4.4).

Whilst EAP can be broadly defined as 'the teaching of English with the specific aim of helping learners to study, conduct research or teach in that language' (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001:8), it is difficult to define more precisely how this manifests in practice because it 'is an international activity of tremendous scope'

(p.8). What is understood to be EAP practice will vary according to geographical region and specific institution, so it is not surprising that 'the development of EAP linguistic research...demonstrates a move away from a focus on language in isolation towards a consideration of discourse in context' (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001:19). The current study contributes to this work. Although it remains difficult to define global trends in EAP, a broad survey of British Council staff in consultation with local stakeholders across 55 different countries (including China) found that there is a rapidly growing global trend towards English medium instruction (Dearden, 2014:2). English medium instruction is defined as:

the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English (Dearden, 2014:4).

Although EAP is explicitly excluded from the author's definition of English medium instruction, international foundation year programmes like the Year One programme at China Campus, when considered as a whole, clearly match the definition. It can therefore reasonably be assumed that issues identified globally across such English medium instruction programmes are likely to be reflected in EAP courses intended to support such programmes. Identified issues include, but are not limited to: a lack of resources; a lack of clear guidance on teaching; exams and assessments; and the role of language centres and English teachers (Dearden, 2014:23). All of these issues are raised in my own exploration of teacher perspectives in Chapter 4. Finally, there seem to be two major concerns associated with EAP provision generally: the extent to which instruction is discipline-specific (discussed in §2.6) and the extent to which instruction is prescriptive as opposed to critical (discussed in §2.5). Before moving on to further discussion of these general concerns, I turn to an issue of particular importance in the Chinese context - test washback.

## **2.3 Test Washback in the Chinese Context**

Foundation Year EAP courses that aim to function as a bridge between high school and undergraduate studies often have a dual role that presents a serious challenge to teachers and program designers – 'a primary one of preparing

students for their prospective studies, but an important secondary aim of helping students to get through the test' (Moore & Morton, 2005:44). The gate-keeping role of the test and the intended language use focus of preparatory classes may 'operate at cross-purposes, which hampers fulfilment of the [intended focus on language use]' (Qi, 2005:148). This, it is argued, can result in unintentional test-focused teaching. Such washback (§1.3.1), should be of major concern to stakeholders in China where examinations play an important role in the motivation to learn English (Wang, 2008:636). Indeed, washback from the National Matriculation English Test (NMET), the English part of the university entrance test or *gaokao* (§1.3.7), has been observed to heavily influence high school English teaching and 'has not succeeded in causing schools to shift their focus from linguistic knowledge to language use' (Qi, 2005:148).

Qi (2005) collected data through interviews and questionnaires from 1388 participants, including teachers, students and *gaokao* inspectors, from a total of 180 schools in two Chinese provinces to study the effects of test washback on English teaching. Washback was evident in 'the content of teaching and time allocation' (Qi, 2005:143) of high school English classes. Several influential factors were observed including 'lack of material resources, school management practices, and teacher factors such as beliefs, educational background...and inadequate understanding of the philosophy of the test' (p.144). Qi (2005) also found that 'a large gap exists between test exercises and the intended activities in the classroom owing to the excessive use of multiple-choice format' (p.151), which led to 'teaching activities such as teaching to the test content, teaching to the test format, and automizing test performance' (p.155). All of Qi's (2005) observations cited above are also identified in my own discussion of teacher perspectives (chapter 4) and are consistent with Moore and Morton's (2005:64) concern that test preparation alone is inadequate for teaching EAP (discussed in §2.4).

In addition to the use of the multiple-choice test format, there is evidence that features of Chinese students' written English may be heavily influenced by exam washback. This is implied by the model answer for the 2005 English section of the NMET in Fujian province (Leedham & Cai, 2013:23), which contains several examples of inappropriate formulaic sequences immediately recognisable to English teachers and examiners in China (e.g. *It is known to us all, what's more,*

*we students*), as well as samples of the problematic dialogic features observed in Chinese candidates' IELTS writing (Mayor, 2006) discussed in section 2.4 below. It would, however, be too simplistic to claim that test washback accounts for the characteristic features observed in Chinese students' written English, which may also be influenced through a range of other factors, such as: Chinese literacy values (see §1.3.1 and 2.9); inappropriate textbooks (see Harwood, 2014:2-9); and learnt language features from high school teachers who may not 'have developed a high ability in writing in English' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:18).

## **2.4 EAP and IELTS Preparation**

The discussion in 2.3 suggests that students from a Chinese high school background will arrive on university EAP programmes with certain expectations of test-focused teaching. A further danger for EAP courses is that similar washback from gate-keeping tests such as IELTS, which is 'the market leader in English language testing for study' (IELTS, 2014), could undermine the intended aim of such courses to move students away from the test-focused approaches with which they are familiar to approaches that aim to better prepare them for the broader range of skills they will need at university. Studies of Chinese learners already studying in Western universities caution 'that standardized IELTS...scores are not necessarily indicative of the communicative competence of these students, nor of their abilities to cope in an English language academic environment' (Holmes, 2005:299).

Designing an EAP course to function primarily as an IELTS test preparation course is not well supported in the literature. In a comparative study of IELTS score gain on IELTS preparation, pre-sessional EAP and combination courses, Green (2005) concluded that 'there were no significant differences in score gains by course type' (p.11). This study involved 476 learners across 15 institutions and suggests that test preparation courses are no better than EAP courses as preparation for the IELTS test. Furthermore, a comparison of IELTS Task 2 essay rubrics and assessment tasks at two Australian universities identified different requirements of university writing and IELTS style tests and led Moore and Morton (2005) to conclude that 'it would be most unwise to view test preparation on its own as an adequate form of EAP writing instruction' (p.64). Prioritising IELTS test practice over locally situated EAP 'could work against the best interests of learners

and receiving institutions by undervaluing the more local competencies that these courses may foster' (Green, 2005:13). By blurring academic purposes and exam-practice, 'such programs run the risk of presenting students with a confusing model of university writing' (Moore & Morton, 2005:64). Such research suggests that the difficulties Chinese learners face in mastering academic English could be exacerbated by reinforcing the tightly constrained test-focus teaching with which they are already familiar and, in the case of the non-*gaokao* students, unsuccessful.

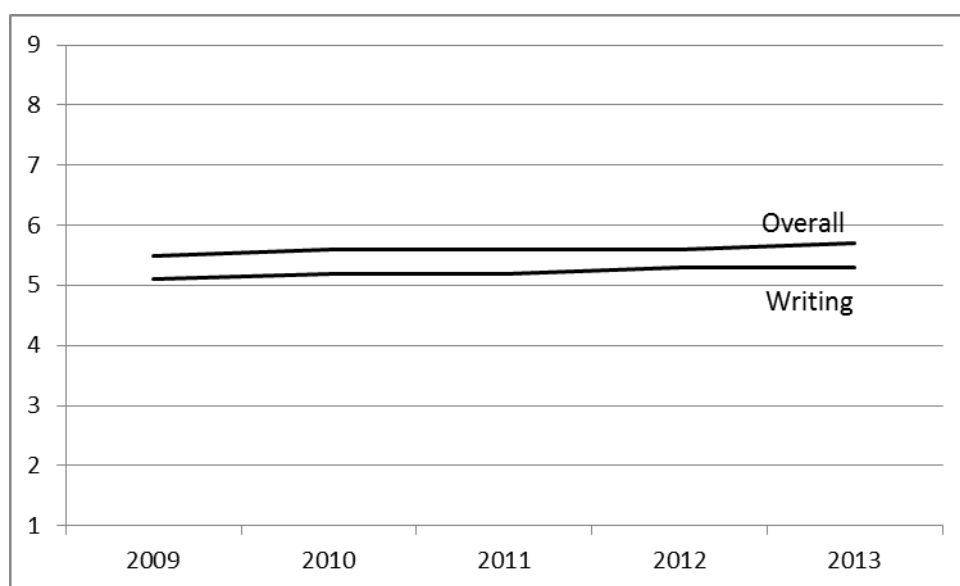
The literature surrounding Chinese students' performance in the IELTS test exemplifies the kinds of confusion that can arise and the impact this can have on students' academic writing ability. There is, for example, evidence that Chinese students are taught formulaic sequences, that is 'a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other meaning elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated' (Wray, 2002:9), in order to prepare for their gate-keeping tests (see for example Wray & Pegg, 2005). In effect, this can be seen as continuation of the preparation for the *gaokao* (section 2.3), as exemplified in the model answer for the 2005 NMET (Leedham & Cai, 2013:23), that is reinforced by subsequent IELTS preparatory courses. As noted in section 1.3.1, learning through memorisation of formulaic sequences is not necessarily an undesirable strategy and it has been successfully employed by Chinese learners, where those 'encouraged to attend to, imitate, memorize, and learn to use the collocations and sequences in the input...markedly improve the quality of their output' (Ding, 2007:279), and can lead to higher fluency and reading automaticity (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:291). Nevertheless, inappropriate dialogic and hortatory features of Chinese learners' writing (e.g. collective use of *you*), which undermine their performance in IELTS, have been identified (Mayor, 2006:118). Thus, the issue is the appropriateness of the formulaic sequences that are learned. Particular concerns are raised that students may 'have been exposed only to 'general purpose' English, with no systematic introduction to the concept of register...they are thus unlikely to have been sensitised to what is appropriate in Western academic writing' (Mayor, 2006:118). By foregrounding IELTS test preparation, an EAP programme not only misses an opportunity to raise student awareness of



appropriate registers for academic writing, but also risks exacerbating the confused model of academic writing that students receive.

With the number of IELTS candidates in China exceeding 300,000 per year (IELTS, 2014) and the distinction made between ‘academic’ and ‘general’ IELTS writing papers, there is a risk that Chinese learners might frame their understanding of academic English within a culture of learning that is constructed and reinforced through Chinese IELTS preparatory courses. Such washback from IELTS may further reinforce students’ belief that the conventionalized formulaic sequences encountered in their *gaokao* preparation (see Leedham & Cai, 2013:23) are representative of English academic writing. This phenomenon exists despite the results for IELTS in China being comparatively low (IELTS, 2013c), particularly the score for writing (Figure 2.1). In other words, these kinds of formulaic sequences continue to be taught but they have not proved to be generally effective for attaining a university entrance level score (i.e. band 6-7) in the test.

**Figure 2.1 - Average IELTS Writing and overall band scores (Academic) in China**



Original source of data: [www.ielts.org/researchers/analysis\\_of\\_test\\_data.aspx](http://www.ielts.org/researchers/analysis_of_test_data.aspx)

Rather than dismissing the learning of lexical sequences per se, this discussion foregrounds the need for Chinese students to understand which of their memorised formulaic chunks are contextually appropriate for a given purpose. This means that:

if Chinese students are to be more successful - not only in the IELTS test but also in their future academic study in English - they need to be provided with models of what will be expected from them in Western academic writing, reflecting contemporary practices across the disciplines. (Mayor, 2006:118)

The potential benefits of studying models of language used in the disciplines are explored further in section 2.7. The differing linguistic features of texts that are identifiable across and within disciplines according to their specific purpose first require consideration of the notion of genre.

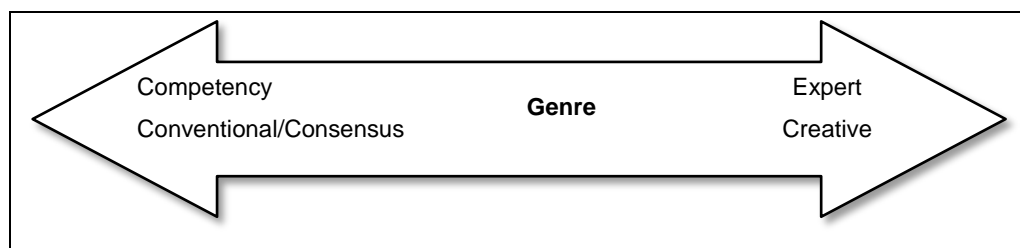
## **2.5 Genre**

The word *genre* is 'extremely slippery' (Swales, 1990:33) but can be understood 'to refer to a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations' (p.33). Although there are differing definitions of what constitutes 'a genre' in the literature (see discussion in Nesi & Gardner, 2012:30-32), its 'distinctive category' and recognisability are derived from the social purpose and rhetorical organisation (frequently labelled 'staging' following Swales, 1990). This section builds on these definitions by considering the debates around the application of the notion of genre to pedagogy and showing how these relate to teaching English for Academic Purposes.

The notion of genre contains an intrinsic tension between the need to follow 'the rules of the game' (Askehave and Swales, 2001:199) and creative manipulation and exploitation by experts 'to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s)' (Bhatia, 1993:13). Thus, the concept of 'a genre' is highly relevant to EAP as it lies precisely at the site of contextually embedded tension between social consensus and conflict, and conventions and creativity at the level of the text. The specific genres that students will need to understand and produce in order to communicate appropriately in their disciplines can be viewed as the result of intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1981) and the socio-historical power relations governing the linguistic choices negotiated and renegotiated through history from which a writer produces the specific features of a given text

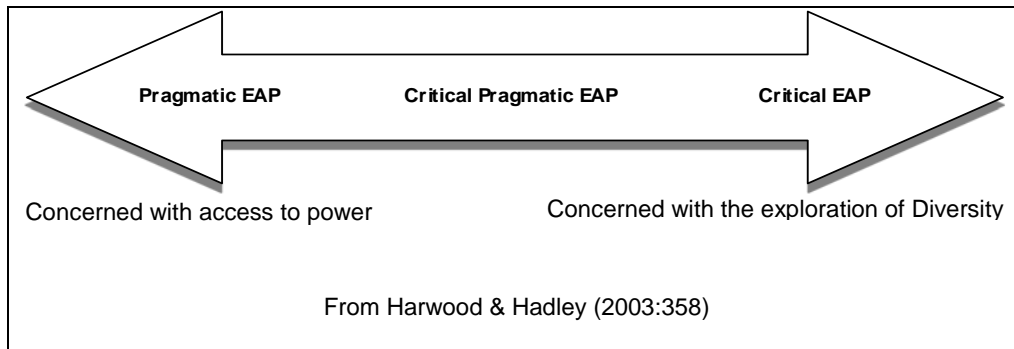
(discussed further in section 3.2). This tension can be viewed as a ‘both and’ continuum (Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2 – Tension contained in the concept of genre**



Hyland (2007) claims that genre pedagogies allow ‘teachers to ground their courses in the texts that students will need to write in occupational, academic, or social contexts...in the world outside the ESL classroom’ (p.148-149). However, genre-based teaching has also been criticized ‘for accommodating learners to existing modes of practice and to the values and ideologies of the dominant culture that valued genres embody’ (Hyland, 2007:151). For EAP practice, this means being too prescriptive by adhering too closely to conventional models and thus perpetuating formulaic writing amongst students (Alexander et al, 2008:48). Just as the notion of genre is situated at the site of tension between competency and expert, convention and creativity, so the teaching of genre is concerned with the apparently oppositional tension between the relationship between critical and pragmatic EAP. Harwood and Hadley (2003:356) define *pragmatic* as ‘teaching students a set of dominant academic discourse norms’ and *critical* as ‘critiquing existing educational institutions and practices.’ However, in practice *pragmatic* contains elements of the *critical* because ‘[d]eveloping “one’s own” critical voice is a common expectation of academic staff’ (Allison, 1996:90). Similarly, *critical* contains elements of the *pragmatic* because ‘failing to provide students with better access to powerful genres...simply perpetuate[s] inequalities’ (Hyland, 2002:125). In an EAP context, ‘powerful genres’ is taken to mean the genres recognised and used by acknowledged experts in the disciplines (e.g. research articles) and is therefore related to debates surrounding discipline-specificity in EAP (see §2.6). Harwood & Hadley (2003) conceptualise this relationship as a continuum (Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3 - Tension between Critical and Pragmatic EAP**



The *pragmatic* end is the tendency towards consensus with the dominant conventions and therefore is concerned with enabling students to access and engage with established practices. The *critical* end is the tendency to challenge or conflict with the dominant conventions, thereby enabling exploration of alternative ways of communicating academic knowledge. It is the acknowledgement of this critical end of the continuum that allows the theories of genre-based EAP and Academic Literacies (discussed in §2.2 above) to be drawn together and this can inform writing instruction (see Wingate & Tribble, 2012 for discussion). However, since EAP courses in China are likely to be geared towards the ‘intervention response’ (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5; see §1.3.2), or acculturation of students to Western ways of learning (the explicit aim of the course in the China Campus context), the focus on such courses will probably lean towards the pragmatic. Nevertheless, appreciation of both pragmatic and critical poles remains necessary to construct one’s own academic voice. This is highly consistent with Flyvbjerg’s (2001:49) argument against simple dualisms in developing conceptual frameworks in general:

Dualisms...may facilitate thinking and writing, but they inhibit understanding by implying a certain neatness that that is rarely found in lived life...Rather than the ‘either-or,’ we should develop a non-dualistic and pluralistic ‘both-and.’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001:49)

For EAP practitioners, an additional practical concern raised by the pedagogical use of genre is that decisions need to be made regarding genre selection. Disciplinary writing covers a wide range of genres. The texts of the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus, for example, are grouped into thirteen ‘classes of genre sharing functional and structural properties’ (Heuboeck, Holmes

& Nesi, 2004:7; see Appendix 2) with each class, or 'genre family', containing many different genres. If a general approach to teaching EAP is adopted rather than English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), then the numbers of genres from which EAP practitioners will have to make selections is multiplied. Given the potential scale of the range of differing genres students are likely to encounter, an alternative approach to the attempt to select the most important genres for particular attention in EAP classes may instead be teaching students how to recognize genres 'as learning strategies [that] can provide students with tools that transfer to multiple contexts' (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010:191). Furthermore, as universities in the UK develop wider ranges of innovative assessment types (Leedham, 2009), the transferability of genre recognition and the ability to 'apply abstract concepts in different social contexts and writing situations' (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010:191) becomes increasingly important.

## **2.6 Debates between EAP and ES(A)P**

An important area of study of direct relevance to the questions this thesis explores is that of discipline-specific EAP, often referred to as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and/or English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP), in contrast to English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP). Gimenez and Haywood (2010:336) make a clear distinction 'between general EAP and ESP,' whereas back in 1987, Hutchinson and Waters categorised EAP as a type of ESP (p.17) and only distinguished between ESP and 'general English' for the strategic purpose of foregrounding the awareness of target situation needs for course planning (p.53). Hyland (2002) categorises ESP as one of three related 'genre' orientations (along with American New Rhetoric and Systemic Functional Linguistics) that 'describe and explain regularities of...form, and situated social purpose' (Hyland, 2002:115). New Rhetoric refers to a body of work which has a strong tradition in the US (see for summary Bazerman, 1988) and is concerned with the 'values and beliefs of text users that genres imply and construct' (Hyland, 2002:115). Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) refers to Halliday's theory of describing the lexicogrammatical choices of language-users that reflect their contexts of culture and situation (see for example Butt et al, 2001:2-14). An ESP approach therefore brings with it certain assumptions about the knowledge of EAP teachers and their ability to identify the values and preferred lexicogrammatical

choices in target situation (i.e. disciplinary) writing and to embed these into EAP instruction (Hyland, 2007:152). It is possible that the distinction made by Gimenez and Haywood (2010) reflects a new strategic categorisation in response to programmes like the Exam-Practice Approach, where EAP is reduced to unsystematic 'general English' test practice, and thus necessitates differentiation from Hyland's (2002) concept of ESP and its fundamental requirement of needs analysis work based on the target situation.

The concept of needs analysis informing the EAP programme is not straightforward where there are dual aims of passing English language assessments and engaging in disciplinary study, as was the case in my own research context. Both aims require consideration of the students' prior learning and current competencies, but an ESP approach would also require identification of their disciplinary reading and writing (Hyland, 2007:152). Thus the issue of EAP course content is in fact another tension - the tension between test practice and the disciplinary focus of ESP, with both vying for limited course time.

An English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) approach, which may be considered to better represent EAP instruction on the Exam-Practice Approach, is based on six main arguments (following Hyland, 2006:10-11):

- an EAP practitioner cannot be expected to learn the knowledge of other academic disciplines that would be required for effective ESAP (often attributed to Spack, 1988)
- the traditional view of English teaching assumes that students need to be competent in general English before attempting the more advanced academic English
- ESAP is relegated to a 'low-status service role' (p.10)
- ESAP 'does not prepare students for unpredictable assignments and encourages unimaginative and formulaic essays' (p.10)
- There are generic skills that occur across disciplines, such as skimming/scanning and summarising/paraphrasing
- 'EAP courses should focus on the common core' (p.11)

To this list can be added the logistical issue that in many pre-sessional EAP programmes, students are not divided according to discipline or sub-discipline (Clapham, 2001:99), which would clearly complicate an ESAP approach, but this is not considered further in this thesis because it is not relevant to my study context where the students were streamed according to their disciplinary focus.

The first argument (Spack, 1988) is not readily dismissed and although tools exist to help the EAP teacher identify important linguistic features of genres and individual texts in different disciplines (see §2.9) and an EAP teacher can collaborate with subject-specialists (Hyland, 2006:14), this issue is raised by teachers in China Campus (§4.3.5) along with the related issue of departmental responsibilities. The second argument can largely be dismissed as irrelevant as it directly contradicts the concept of EAP as distinct from general English regardless of the specific approach to EAP that is accepted, and is contrary to explicit guidance in the UKHQ syllabus in my own research context. Regarding the third argument, it is difficult to see how an EGAP course with less engagement with the disciplines would be given a higher institutional status than ESAP. Argument four seems to ignore the range of genres in disciplinary writing (see §2.6) and the impact of the five-paragraph essay on EGAP (discussed below). Challenges to arguments five and six are discussed at length in the following sections of this chapter. The most important point, as discussed in 2.3 and 2.4, is the fact that EGAP as test preparation alone is problematized from the perspective of relative score gains in tests (Green, 2005) and the observations that *gaokao* and IELTS writing are not representative of university writing.

The EGAP approach is contested because the disassociation of EAP reading and writing practices from tangible academic disciplinary language and corresponding academic purposes may lead to the teaching of conventions that are ‘non-academic genre types: expository essays... argumentative essays...newspaper writing’ (Loi, 2010:267). The choice of general, non-academic genres as reading texts in EAP classrooms is explicitly problematized in the research literature:

newspaper and magazine articles...are usually chosen as texts  
but these are not the main genres that students have to read at  
university. The audience and purpose of journalistic texts are very

different from academic texts so the layout...and organization are inappropriate and the language is often difficult and culturally loaded. (Alexander & Argent, 2010:2)

Furthermore, selection of reading texts based solely on a general English exam creates further challenges such as criteria for selection and sequencing of texts, and risking the construction of a course based on random topic content (see Appendix 1). This has also been problematized in the literature:

The attempt to include a range of subjects results in a random collection of texts that does not mirror a university context, where texts and activities are related and sequenced in terms of their content. This random selection leads to incoherence in the development of understanding and linguistic repertoires. (Alexander & Argent, 2010:2)

The incoherence created through such selection of non-academic reading material for academic purposes is also likely to be reflected in student writing. Indeed, the danger of a 'study skills' approach to EAP (i.e. the fifth argument for EGAP above) is that writing becomes 'a unitary, context-free activity, in which the same patterns and rules apply to all writing...with prescriptions for cohesive links and structures within and between paragraphs which are independent of text type' (Ivanič, 2004:227). Such a view may explain the dominance of the five-paragraph essay, a 'made-up-for-school essay format...[that persists] enshrined in textbooks and tested by the testing establishment, even after scholars in composition have documented their irrationality' (Brannon et al, 2008:16). Not only does the view of the five-paragraph essay as an 'all-purpose' approach to foundational writing ignore differing genres and the social purposes of writing (of concern in the Chinese context, §1.3.1), but its insistence 'as a "basic form" for struggling writers creates a needless impediment to composing. Imposing an arbitrary format makes learning to write just that much harder' (Brannon et al, 2008:17). Thus, EGAP becomes a manifestation of the 'Study Skills' model (Lea & Street, 2006), perceived as an autonomous model of language that 'fails to account for how language is actually used by individuals acting in social contexts' (Hyland, 2006:37) and may even make learning to write appropriately in the disciplines more



challenging. This relates to the issue of transferability (discussed in §2.5), which is becoming increasingly important as tertiary level assessments develop in response to greater numbers of students, a more diverse student body and the increasing use of e-learning technologies (Leedham, 2009). Alexander and Argent (2010:2) express no doubt that ‘the solution is to allow relevance to drive the [EAP] materials.’

A Systemic Functional Linguistic analysis of Business Studies student papers was conducted by Griffiths (2010) at China Campus (i.e. the research context for my own study). Based on four randomly selected essays that achieved average (mode) grades around the 40% pass-mark, Griffiths (2010) identified ‘considerable problems regarding the students understanding of the requirements of the target genre’ (p.20). In particular, ‘[t]he tenor of the social relationship is realised in a fairly inconsistent manner across the texts’ (Griffiths, 2010:18). This is consistent with an identified ‘weakness in academic writing...in China’ (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:18), the *gaokao* preparation (Leedham & Cai, 2013) and the data from IELTS tests where ‘the necessary sense of audience may be lacking’ (Mayor, 2006:118). Griffiths (2010) concludes that because it ‘is covered extensively in the EAP teaching[, t]he weak understanding of the [Business Studies essay] genre exhibited by the students was...disappointing’ (p21). This suggests that students are unable to transfer the essay-writing staging that they learn in their EAP writing class to their Business Studies writing, or that they are able to transfer their EAP knowledge but that different generic-staging may be taught that is inappropriate to the Business Studies requirements. His recommendations include ‘presenting a model [Business Studies] essay and explaining the key generic stages’ (p26) in the Business Studies class; in other words moving the responsibility for teaching academic writing from EAP to within the Business Studies faculty itself.

Through a questionnaire-based survey of 84 students, Griffiths (2010:21) identified a ‘direct correlation between the frequency with which different forms of assessment had featured in their secondary education and how easy the students claimed they found each type.’ Essays were ‘the least common form of assessment that the students experienced at high school, being conducted less than once a fortnight on average, whilst multiple-choice questions and short answer questions featured more than once a week’ (Griffiths, 2010:21). This has

important implications for the appropriacy of test-preparation EAP reading materials because classroom activities tend to be of the less challenging multiple-choice questions type. Such washback is clearly consistent with critique of 'the excessive use of multiple-choice format' (Qi, 2005:151), which thereby problematizes the predominantly multiple-choice format of academic reading exams like those in the China Campus context. Griffiths' (2010) findings suggest an ESAP focus on appropriate disciplinary genres would be more helpful.

In a comprehensive survey of faculty views on student performance before and after an ESAP intervention at another UK university campus in the East China region, it was found that students who took an ESAP (or ESAC - English for Specific Academic Contexts) course were reportedly more familiar with subject specific vocabulary, concepts and assessments than the control groups (Brodie & Wallis, 2011). Significant improvements in students' understanding of lectures and participation in seminars and discussions was also reported. In a survey of students, the researchers found that Engineering students who had completed the ESAC course indicated greater confidence than those who had not, but this was not true for Business students.

The debates presented in 2.5 and 2.6 surrounding discipline-specificity in EAP and what it means to adopt a genre approach are ongoing but it seems that 'an EAP teacher will [need to] be able to recognize and explore disciplinary differences and how they influence the way knowledge is expanded and communicated' (BALEAP, 2008:4). An important part of this debate relates to teaching academic reading and vocabulary, which is echoed in my study (see §4.3).

## **2.7 Academic Reading Instruction, Vocabulary Learning and EAP**

As debate continues around EAP, ESP and ESAP (§2.6), strong arguments for a genre-based ESP approach come from the fields of 'academic reading' and 'academic vocabulary'. Vocabulary acquisition is regarded as one of the most significant concerns for EAP students (Alexander et al, 2008:152; Jordan, 1997:149) and '[t]he main resource for vocabulary learning in the classroom is the reading text in which the language occurs in context' (Alexander et al, 2008:152). EAP curricula should therefore view 'a strong commitment to vocabulary

instruction as an important component of reading development' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:78).

Reading fluency is important not only so that students are able to deal with the large amount of extended reading expected of their academic disciplines, but also for the motivation to engage in further reading and learning beyond the classroom (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:290). It is estimated that reading fluency requires knowledge of around 95% of the words encountered in a text (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:76; Alexander et al, 2008:140) and 'without word-reading accuracy, comprehension would quickly become degraded' (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:291). Given this importance, it is perhaps surprising that 'the means for developing a large vocabulary are not consistently developed in L2 reading instruction, nor is it typically given a high priority in L2 instructional contexts' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:76). Indeed, it is not only the form and topical content of reading text that is problematized in the literature (see §2.6), but also how they are used in the EAP classroom context. Alexander and Argent (2010) argue that the purpose of reading activities is likely to impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of learners developing an appropriate lexical resource, which can be problematic when:

Texts are picked up briefly and then dropped...and rarely exploited to the full for language. [They] largely fail to identify and prioritize the key academic language that students need. (Alexander & Argent, 2010:2)

The frequent switching of disciplinary-unrelated topics is likely to impact on student comprehension since:

we find a text difficult to understand if it is lexically and semantically dense: that is, if there is too little repetition of vocabulary, if frequent topic changes mean that too much new vocabulary is being introduced too rapidly, and too many of the words are unfamiliar or being used in unusual combinations. (Stubbs, 2001:304)

EAP courses have exhibited a tendency to assume that students would learn vocabulary incidentally (Jordan, 1997:149). This reflects a 'common, if not universal, assumption in vocabulary learning research...that words are learned

incidentally in reading' (Chen & Truscott, 2010:693). However, it has been argued that incidental learning alone will be extremely inefficient because 'vocabulary learning is determined by repeated encounters with the words and by quality of attention that learners pay to them' (Laufer & Rozovski-Roitblat, 2011:395). For efficient vocabulary acquisition, learners need repeated encounters with words, and activities that help them to 'notice' the word (see Schmidt, 2010 for discussion of 'The Noticing Hypothesis') and 'induce' the need to do something with the word (Laufer & Rozovski-Roitblat, 2011:395). The need for exercises focusing on vocabulary requires a method for identifying which vocabulary will be taught (discussed in §2.8; tasks associated with the Exam-Practice Approach at China Campus are not presented in this thesis, see §6.3). The need for repeated encounters means that extensive reading is often seen as essential to vocabulary acquisition, and as a pre-requisite for incidental learning to occur. 'L2 students will not develop a very large recognition vocabulary until they have had thousands of hours of practice reading L2 texts' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:78). However, time constraints on a typical foundation year programme preclude the possibility of learners effectively acquiring a large vocabulary through wide ranging extensive reading in class. To attempt to do so would raise further complexities in the selection criteria of reading texts, which would probably not be a worthwhile investment of time since 'there is still little research that associates extensive reading directly with improving reading-comprehension abilities' (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:289). This suggests that extensive reading would therefore require independent reading outside the classroom.

Perhaps the most important point that has been made with respect to reading is that:

there is one fundamental aspect which can be the starting point for other considerations. When students read, it is for a *purpose*.  
(Jordan, 1997:143)

This is similarly emphasised in more recent EAP textbooks, for example:

The first consideration in developing academic literacy through reading in the classroom is providing students with an authentic

reading purpose so that they have clear goals beyond simply understanding the content of the text. (Alexander et al, 2008:136)

Thus, the purpose of the reading task is viewed as more important than attention to vocabulary alone or even the type of reading text that is used. The selection of reading texts and identification of target vocabulary to teach should be consistent with the students' purpose in studying EAP, and are therefore closely related to the debate between EGAP and ESAP (§2.6).

## **2.8 Identification and Categorization of Vocabulary for EAP**

### **Teaching**

Identifying and selecting the vocabulary that students will need for their reading in their future studies is no simple matter. Estimates for university entry level vocabulary sizes range from 17,000 to 100,000 word families (defined below) with 'the most commonly cited at about 40,000 words' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:77). However, '[w]ithin narrowly focused areas of interest, such as in an Economics text, a much smaller vocabulary is needed' (Nation & Waring, 2001). Quantifying vocabulary sizes is complicated by differing interpretations of what constitutes a 'word'. *Word* can, for example, refer to a *word family* containing 'a base word and all its derived and inflected forms' (Bauer & Nation, 1993:253); a lemma, which is itself difficult to define and has been used to refer to word stems or base-forms of words without consideration of grammatical changes or the equivalent of dictionary headwords (see Knowles & Don, 2004:69-72 for detailed discussion); or all of the word's different word forms (i.e. those derived and inflected forms that would constitute the word family) (Sinclair, 1991:41). There is, then, no definitive quantified agreement on the vocabulary needed for university entrance, which is further complicated by differing genres and disciplines; complications that would be multiplied considerably for an EGAP approach (see §2.5 and 2.6).

In addition to the complexity of quantifying vocabulary sizes, there are different ways of categorising and 'identifying academic vocabulary for instruction' (Baumann & Graves, 2010:5-8). Categories of vocabulary can include, for example: general (e.g. West's (1953) General Service List); general academic (e.g. Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List); domain-specific academic or technical (i.e. words that have a defined meaning that is specific to a given topic area or

academic discipline); and off-list (i.e. none of the above). This can become very complex. Mudraya (2005:239), for example, highlights a possible distinction between 'strictly technical words...characterized by the absence of exact synonyms... [and] sub-technical vocabulary...with technical as well as non-technical senses.' Existent word lists provide a convenient means of classifying vocabulary but, when it comes to *academic* vocabulary lists, there is no clear agreement in the literature and it seems very unlikely that universal academic word lists are possible (see §2.9). Furthermore, looking at vocabulary alone is probably insufficient because words do not operate in isolation. A distinction can be made 'between vocabulary, traditionally understood as a stock of individual words with fixed meanings, and lexis which takes into account not only single words but also word combinations that we store in our mental lexicons ready for use' (Mudraya, 2005:236). *Lexis* can therefore be used to include: vocabulary; formulaic sequences (see §2.4); multi-word strings of collocational lexical bundles - strings or sequences of words that occur together more frequently than would be expected by chance (Hyland & Tse, 2009:119) - or clusters (Scott, 2010:118); and collocates that 'occur in the neighbourhood of [a selected] word' (Scott, 2010:121) depending on the collocation horizon used for analysis (the distance in words left and right of the word under study). There is evidence that it is lexis rather than vocabulary alone that should be the focus of EAP instruction, and that this is discipline-specific (discussed in §2.9).

Before reviewing the literature pointing towards a subject-specific approach to academic lexis instruction, it is worth considering that general approaches may have been influenced in part by the 'common core hypothesis' (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001:16-18). This states that the most common words and lexical bundles will be encountered most frequently whatever the specific topic of the texts and can therefore be learnt using *any* appropriate text. However, to use this as justification for the use of inappropriate genres (e.g. journalistic readings) would be a misunderstanding of the hypothesis because, in terms of learning the most frequently occurring lexis, the study of subject-specific texts will be as effective a preparation for a *general* English language test as would the study of non-specialist general topics. This is consistent with Green's (2005) findings that the different approaches had little impact on IELTS scores. However, subject-specific

texts tend to have a narrower range of vocabulary (e.g. Nation & Waring's (2001) Economics text) so beyond the 'common core', it is logically possible to argue that students would need exposure to a wider range of texts to better prepare them for a general English test. Such an argument for a wider range of reading texts remains unsupported by research into the relationship between extensive reading and text comprehension (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:289), and is inconsistent with Green's (2005) findings. Nor does it take into account the misleading impact of non-academic texts on student learning or the practical constraints of delivering an EAP course based on extensive reading.

An efficient compromise has been proposed where instruction 'can focus on the 2,000 to 3,000 most common words as an essential foundation for word-recognition automaticity, and then focus on vocabulary that is appropriate to specific topics and fields of study' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:78). According to the common core hypothesis, the initial focus on the 2,000 to 3,000 most common words does not necessitate mastery of general English; instead EAP 'materials should demonstrate that the language students are learning is high frequency and transferable to their academic disciplines' (Alexander & Argent, 2010:2). Thus, an argument for an ESAP approach to vocabulary tuition would seem to be vindicated in the literature from the perspectives of course time constraints and transferability to target disciplinary reading. Tools that could be used to identify disciplinary-specific lexis and account for differing genres are discussed below (§2.10).

## **2.9 General Academic Word Lists Problematised**

This sub-section considers the contested claim that '[a]n academic vocabulary list...deserves a lot of attention in a variety of ways from both the learners and teacher no matter what their specialist area of academic study' (Coxhead & Nation, 2001:256). The most widely used general academic vocabulary list is Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL) (Hyland & Tse, 2009:112), which is readily available online accompanied by user-friendly teaching and learning tools such as Haywood's (2007) *AWL Highlighter* and *AWL Gapmaker*. It is, therefore, logistically useful where time constraints and professional knowledge limitations preclude the identification of specific target-reading vocabulary lists. The omission of discipline-specific 'technical' vocabulary makes EAP instruction more

manageable by evading concerns over ‘the [English] teacher’s lack of background knowledge of the subject’ (Coxhead & Nation, 2001:256).

It is noteworthy that Nation and Coxhead (2001) use the term ‘academic vocabulary’ rather than ‘AWL.’ Academic vocabulary then becomes an umbrella term encompassing not only the AWL but also Mudraya’s (2005:239) classification of ‘sub-technical’ vocabulary (i.e. ‘lexical items with technical as well as non-technical senses...which have the same meaning in several technical disciplines’), where the two differ in a specific corpus, excluding only discipline-specific lexis without synonyms as ‘technical’ (Mudraya, 2005:238). Such a distinction seems to be justified because ‘[a]cademic vocabulary is generally not as well-known as technical vocabulary’ (Coxhead & Nation, 2001:255), which is likely to be given greater attention in subject classes, and studies have shown that ‘the non-technical sense of a sub-technical lexical item is used more frequently than its technical sense’ (Mudraya, 2005:242). However, the simple division of academic vocabulary and technical vocabulary is complicated by consideration of the extent of disciplinary specialization. For example, in his construction of a basic engineering list (BEL), Ward (2009:30) observed that many words that occur frequently in Engineering texts are actually unevenly distributed across different engineering fields ‘and thus decidedly more important for some fields than others.’ Hence, the assumption that a focus on general academic vocabulary would be a valuable undertaking is problematized.

Findings from corpus-based research suggest ‘the view that students should be developing a *general* academic vocabulary is actually quite contentious’ (Hyland & Tse, 2009:113). The AWL is critiqued because ‘individual lexical items on the list often occur and behave in different ways across disciplines’ (Hyland & Tse, 2009:111), with correspondingly different distribution patterns and semantic functions. This is also consistent with the differences of frequency and distribution observed between ESL and university textbooks (Miller, 2011). Lexical bundles or clusters are used in different ways, and occur at different frequencies in different disciplines (Hyland, 2009; see Table 2.1), thus strengthening the argument for both specificity and the instructional focus on lexis rather than vocabulary word lists. Whilst the lexical bundles in Table 2.1 were derived from a corpus of research articles and post-graduate dissertations (Hyland, 2009:19), Hardy and



Römer (2013:204) report findings that suggest disciplinary specificity is also observed in undergraduate writing. Hyland and Tse's (2009:113) identification of differences between the disciplines in the occurrence of AWL words was conducted using a much broader corpus, including textbook chapters and academic book reviews as well as postgraduate and undergraduate writing.

**Table 2.1 - Most frequent 4-word bundles in two disciplines**

<b>Electrical Engineering</b>	<b>Business Studies</b>
<i>on the other hand</i>	<i>on the other hand</i>
<i>as shown in figure</i>	<i>in the case of</i>
<i>in the case of</i>	<i>at the same time</i>
<i>is shown in figure</i>	<i>at the end of</i>
<i>it can be seen</i>	<i>on the basis of</i>
<i>as shown in fig</i>	<i>as well as the</i>
<i>is shown in fig</i>	<i>the extent to which</i>
<i>can be seen that</i>	<i>the end of the</i>
<i>can be used to</i>	<i>significantly different from zero</i>
<i>the performance of the</i>	<i>are more likely to</i>

Source: adapted from Hyland (2009:20)

Furthermore, 'most of the words which are found in academic collocations are not found on Coxhead's influential Academic Word List...[which] reflects a serious methodological weakness in Coxhead's listing' (Durrant, 2009:157). Similarities and differences between disciplines are observed and 'while disciplines outside of the arts and humanities appear to share many collocations, it is not obvious that they all use them in the same way' (Durrant, 2009:165). Thus, from a research and curriculum development perspective the AWL, along with other lexical lists, cannot be assumed to be an appropriate word list for all EAP students. The use of non-academic texts and general approaches to academic vocabulary are problematized. The next section discusses a means of identifying specific lexis for instruction - corpus tools.

## **2.10 Corpus Linguistics and EAP**

Baumann and Graves (2010:8) indicate that vocabulary identification and categorization should be done at the level of the curriculum and it is already clear from the discussion above that this need not be done solely *intuitively* because 'academic language can be checked using an online concordance with an

academic corpus' (Alexander & Argent, 2010:2). Corpus linguistics and the use of computer concordances therefore have the potential to revolutionise approaches to EAP vocabulary instruction by enabling researchers and practitioners to statistically measure frequencies and patterns of usage in target disciplinary texts rather than relying on intuition. This is important because intuition is often 'not in accordance with the...observed facts of usage' (Sinclair, 1991:4). It also strongly supports the use of 'authentic' texts, which, with respect to EAP, could be interpreted as target situation disciplinary texts. This is because '[i]nvented examples would...appeal for their authenticity to a non-existent context, which would eventually be evaluated by someone's intuition, with all the misleading consequences of that' (Sinclair, 1991:5). Indeed, reliance on the intuition of English language teachers (i.e. experts in a different field) can lead to 'considerable confusion amongst students and writing instructors regarding the kinds of writing students are required to produce across disciplines' (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:3). Nor are EAP textbooks necessarily reliable as they frequently fail to present 'the language of real life, as attested by corpora' (Harwood, 2014:3).

Ultimately, however, it appears that even using corpus approaches, a degree of intuition may be necessary in the categorization of specific lexis. Since '[w]ords from given lexical fields will co-occur and recur in particular texts' (Stubbs, 2001:314), derived word lists 'fall *intuitively* into a few identifiable lexical fields, tell us roughly what the [texts] are "about", and could be used as a crude type of content analysis' (p.314, my italics). Sinclair (2004) suggests that such '[i]ntuition can help in many ways in language research, in conjunction with other criteria of a more examinable nature.' The aim of corpus-based research is not to try to remove the role of human interpretation altogether, which would be counter-productive given the end goal of written production is reader interpretation, but to reduce reliance on intuition and to ensure that it is not intuition alone that guides curriculum development. Human decision-making remains important, for example, where corpora are used for comparative studies. This is because the existence of well-known corpora that may be frequently used for contrastive purposes does not automatically 'confer representative status on them' (Sinclair, 2004). The criteria used for selecting the reference corpus must reflect the specific components that are to be compared (Sinclair, 2004) and these criteria need to be made as

transparent as possible so that the appropriateness of the reference corpus and any results can be judged (discussed further in §3.6.2).

Corpus-based research (see §3.6.4.2 and 3.6.4.3 for further discussion) shows that tools can allow researchers (and course developers) to efficiently investigate the frequencies of, amongst other things, personal pronouns or transitional/signal/signposting lexis (§5.2) in academic texts. Corpus-derived data also provides the evidence on which Hyland's specificity in EAP argument is constructed (§2.9), and corpus tools lend themselves to the development of ESAP approaches. For example, comparison of an Economics textbook and a general academic corpus resulted in a list of 34 words that occurred far more frequently in the Economics textbook, and that 'with the exception of *you*...are content words clearly related to Economics' (Sutarsyah, Nation & Kennedy, 1994: 44). The same study also found that 57% of the word families in the general academic corpus 'do not occur in the Economics text' (p.44), which is consistent with the narrower lexical range found in subject texts. Whilst this superficially offers some support for the argument that ESAP might not prepare the students so well for a general English test, it also indicates that a focus on learning general academic word lists will be an inefficient tactic for students aiming to study Economics. It may also be ineffective because '39% of the Economics text's...word families do not occur in the general academic corpus' (p.45). If the main purpose of EAP is to prepare students for their future studies 'it clearly seems much more efficient to get [them] focused on the language of their particular subject' (p.45). It also arguably problematizes the suitability of a general English test for assessing EAP.

The discussion above appears to be consistent with the notion of genre (§2.5) because subject-specificity also operates in the rhetorical structures of whole texts. However, it has been claimed that corpus-based methodology is 'at odds with the more top-down kind of process-based analysis common to the genre approach...[and does not] take into account the contextual features of the text' (Flowerdew, 2005:324). Nevertheless, the literature indicates that a corpus-driven analysis can offer teachers very useful information about vocabulary items and lexical bundles in a given text, and these can be related to the more macro-level organisational structure of the text and used as part of the genre identifying process. The reference corpus used in my study (discussed in 3.6) is divided into

13 genre families (Appendix 2) devised by the corpus-compilers who claim that '[t]he concept of 'genre' is central to research on academic writing' (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:24). Thus the major areas of EAP tuition - reading, writing, genre and lexis - are all interrelated. A 'synthesis of genre and corpus linguistic approaches' (Flowerdew, 2005:325) can therefore be mutually beneficial and 'corpora are now taking on an increasingly mainstream role [in ESP] with the compilation of small 'localised' corpora' (Flowerdew, 2009:396).

### 2.10.1. Practical Pedagogical Application

The lexical frequency data generated by corpus linguistics provide a reliable method for the identification of lexis for EAP instruction and 'have led to the production of vocabulary lists and lexical syllabuses for ESP...course[s] at tertiary level [and even becoming]...an indispensable tool in course design' (Mudraya, 2005:238). Taking English for Engineering as an example:

for language learning and teaching, smaller corpora can be more useful as they are designed to represent the specific part of the language under investigation and are tailored to address the aspects of the language relevant to the needs of the learner. (Mudraya, 2005:237)

Ward's (2009) basic engineering list (BEL), for example, was created using 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate textbooks as the target situation, then excluding function words (e.g. prepositions, conjunctions) and those that were not frequently encountered across all Engineering fields. The result is a list of 299 word types (i.e. the specific form of a given word rather than its lemma or word family) that would need to be understood by all Engineering students regardless of their future specialism. This work is of particular interest because Ward (2009) deliberately set out to construct a word list that is not only relevant, but also manageable for 'learners who have nothing like mastery of the GSL or the AWL' (p.172). In other words, learners like the non-*gaokao* students of the present study. The BEL includes 216 words from the GSL and 78 from the AWL (p.177), suggesting that students would already be familiar with some of them, which may increase learner motivation by making the list seem more learnable.

Corpus-based data has also been shown to be useful in the classroom and 'one of the many persuasive reasons for utilizing computer corpora in the development of vocabulary materials' (Mudraya, 2005:244) is the use of concordancing to raise student awareness of the collocational patterns of a given word. Ballance (2012:144) makes the link between genre-based approaches and subject-specificity explicit, claiming that applying corpus tools to EAP vocabulary test design would be pedagogically beneficial because:

issues such as genre, disciplinary specificity, and context, cotext and use would be brought back into focus, and this in turn could encourage teachers and students to engage with vocabulary on those levels. (Ballance, 2012:147)

There are, however, identified constraints:

general EAP tutor experience, average student level and motivation, and institutional resources and support would seem prohibitive of corpus technology being exploited in the classroom. (Ballance, 2012:145)

Whilst EAP teachers' lack of experience and limited institutional resources may continue to obstruct the classroom exploitation of corpus tools, the idea is not new. Jordan's (1997) EAP book cites examples of in-class concordancing from 1991 and 1994 and 'stresses the overriding importance and advantage of having authentic text available in the form of concordances' (p.160). Of course, students and teachers may need instructional input to be able to interpret and manipulate such digital data, which leads me to the consideration of multimodality in EAP.

## **2.11 Multimodality**

The study of the different systems of communicating a message (semiotic modes) that are used in a text is referred to as multimodality (Goodman, Lillis, Maybin & Mercer, 2003:219), which is becoming increasingly important as advances in communications technology continue to break down traditional distinctions between the written and spoken and to foreground the key role played by visual modes.

Indeed, the traditional opposition between spoken and 'written' language has been overtaken by events, and a much more helpful terminology in modern society would be *spoken* as opposed to *visual* language...the relative social significance of visual imagery is increasing dramatically. (Fairclough, 2001:23)

This is not only evident in the mass media and modern social networking platforms 'but also the documents produced by...universities...have acquired colour illustrations and sophisticated layout' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:107). In fact, all written texts are arguably multimodal:

Even the simplest written texts are always multimodal, consisting of linguistic, visual and material modes...[and] a social view of literacy recognises that linguistic components of texts often cannot be disentangled from other forms of visual semiosis such as pictures, logos and diagrams. (Satchwell & Ivanič, 2007:304-305)

Corpus based studies have also highlighted the importance of visual data in EAP, especially for Engineering students. The collocational string *shown in fig[ure]* appears four times in the top seven lexical bundles ranked by frequency in Hyland's (2009:20) list (Table 2.1). The reference to visuals that these collocations imply is consistent with both the local expectations of ENG written assessments at China Campus (Figure 1.6) and the growing importance of the visual observed by van Leeuwen (2005a). It seems, then, that the kind of 'grey space' (i.e. dense and/or boring in appearance) exemplified by the reading material in Figure 1.3 (§1.3) is contrary to modern developments in the design of university texts.

A lack of visual elements in reading and writing materials may be of particular concern to Chinese learners because evidence suggests that L1 Chinese students at UK tertiary educational institutions put greater reliance on non-lexical textual features than their L1 English counterparts (Leedham, 2011:195). It is also likely to be contrary to the literacy experiences of Chinese students (§1.3), many of whom are familiar with various kinds of multimodal digital texts inside and outside the classroom (Lin & Li, 2014). Whilst commercial culture arguably raises reader expectations of visually appealing texts, the use of non-lexical textual elements also has intrinsic pedagogical benefits because visual representations help

students to make sense of a written text, to 'intuitively perceive its relevance and its potential for understanding complex issues' (van Leeuwen, 2005a:45). Combined, the appeal and assistance afforded in understanding complex texts is likely to increase student motivation and it has been shown that '[s]tudents engaged in learning that incorporates multimodal designs, on average, outperform students who learn using traditional approaches with single modes' (Metiri Group, 2008:13). This has been recognised in China and '[t]he use of ICT in teaching and learning has become common in many national and provincial key universities' (Jin & Cortazzi, 2006:8), has been widely implemented in primary and secondary education and is seen as a means of opening up access to education for children living in remote areas (Chinese Government Website, 2013). Moreover, digitization of the teaching of academic writing to enable students' self-study through IT resources is currently supported by the China Ministry of Education (Fang, 2010). Hamp-Lyons (2011:4) raises concerns, however, that 'the potential of modern forms of electronically-mediated interaction is barely acknowledged in most EAP course: this is a failure we may come to regret.'

New technologies, however, raise questions over the function of visuals in a text and it is not clear 'that illustration-as-mere-decoration has any effect on student attitudes to English or to language learning' (Hill, 2003:177). Nevertheless, it can be argued that teaching appropriate interpretation of visual elements as a literacy skill is necessary because understanding that 'design is information' (Lutz, 1989:138) will enable students to cope with:

the new relationships between images, graphics and letterforms that are required in the age of computer-mediated communication...Even ordinary computer users must make meaningful choices from a wide array of letterforms, and combine them with images and graphic elements in meaningful ways. (van Leeuwen, 2005a:29)

Thus non-lexical textual elements and basic principles of document design need to be understood to enable users (including teachers and students) to make contextually appropriate as well as meaningful choices. This has led some researchers to extend the concept of academic vocabulary to include non-lexical

elements that form part of the meaning-making design of a document. This not only includes images and relations of spatial layout (van Leeuwen, 2005a:198-218), but also *symbols* representing objects, processes, or verbal expressions, such as those used in mathematics (Baumann & Graves, 2010:11), and 'mathematical symbolism in mathematical discourse' (O'Halloran, 2008:444). Learning to interpret multimodal texts and to produce such texts coherently is becoming increasingly necessary at all educational levels. Language teaching professionals, therefore, 'need to be able to talk and think seriously about multimodal communication because they need to help learners develop *multimodal communicative competence*' (Royce, 2002:192), extending the notion of communicative competence through linguistic and performance competence (Hymes, 1972).

Studies of teaching text structure, cohesion and signalling devices have led some researchers to recommend that the teaching of academic reading should include 'graphic representations to highlight the organisation of text information and raise student awareness of the rhetorical organisation of the text' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:81). This may have even greater significance in contexts with Chinese learners who 'make greater use of visual processing than do readers of English because of their L1 orthography' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:47). Bell's (1995) work, for example, suggests that the visual qualities of Chinese characters (汉字) are related to different cultural values and expectations of literacy. Packard (2000:1) highlights a potential obstacle in the 'common belief that Chinese 'doesn't have words'...or that Chinese 'has no morphology.'" L1 English users can readily identify a word as 'a string of letters...bounded on each side by a word space or another punctuation mark' (Sinclair, 1991:176) but the same is not true in written Chinese and this simple observation suggests different cognitive processes in the reading of texts. Some research has indicated that Chinese learners tend to be significantly slower than L1 alphabet-using groups at word-recognition because they '[a]re accustomed to processing primarily logographic characters in their LI [and] d[o] not have the advantage of transferring such LI knowledge to this task' (Muljani, Koda & Moates, 1998:109). Reading may be further slowed because there are very few examples of 'shared vocabulary or cognates' (Grabe & Stoller, 2002:47) between English and Chinese.



Perhaps, by making the principles of visual composition, structure and layout, as well as vocabulary and lexical bundles usage explicit, students might be better able to deal with written principles of rhetorical structure and textual composition. Such a view is supported by Leedham's (2011) findings that show Chinese undergraduate students make more use of non-lexical items - i.e. tables, figures and formulae - in their writing than their British peers. The relative frequency (normalised to words per million) of these items in the two groups of writing is given in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2 - Visuals in L1 Chinese and L1 English undergraduate writing**

	tables	figures	formulae
L1 Chinese	751	1216	3010
L1 English	432	798	1936

Source: adapted from Leedham (2011:195)

This strongly suggests that an adequate academic reading programme should embrace and model multimodal texts, perhaps especially so in China.

## 2.12 Summary

The review of literature in this chapter indicates that designing an EAP programme around IELTS test preparation alone is not well supported as there is little evidence that it positively impacts the target test scores. It may also be misleading where EAP classes attempt to cover a wide range of general reading texts, and the inclusion of the inappropriate formats and structures of non-academic texts has led some researchers to call for genre-based ESAP approaches. Such approaches seem to be supported by research into academic vocabulary which has problematized the concept of general academic vocabulary. Corpus tools provide a method of checking researcher and EAP teacher intuitions about lexis and have been used to establish specific local vocabulary-led EAP lessons and curricula. However, there are practical constraints on the use of corpora in some EAP contexts. Visual modes are becoming increasingly important in academic reading and writing and may be of particular importance for Chinese students. EAP instructors will therefore need to be familiar with the manipulation and

production of various kinds of visual textual elements appropriate to academic reading and writing.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I outline the methodology underpinning the study. I introduce my ontological and epistemological position towards research; establish the boundaries of the case being studied; and describe the methods used to collect and analyse the data. This chapter also includes the ethical issues that were encountered during this study.

My study centred on two key areas of focus: teacher perspectives and materials (text) analysis. The methods of data collection used to explore these areas and how these relate to my research questions are outlined in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 - Mapping Research Questions and Data Collection Methods**

Focus	Research Question	Data Collection methods
Teacher Perspectives	RQ1) What key contextual factors did teachers perceive as influencing the development of the Exam-Practice Approach?	Interviews  Survey  Collection of documentary data
	RQ2) What are the views of teachers and managers of the Exam-Practice Approach to teaching academic reading and writing?	Participant Observation
Text	RQ3) What does an analysis of the EPA reading and writing input materials reveal about their lexis and functional purposes?	Corpora Construction Collection of pedagogic texts

Before describing the methods of data collection and analysis in detail, I will briefly state the ontological and epistemological position I adopted in the study.

## 3.2 Ontological and Epistemological Position

This subsection briefly sets out my ontological and epistemological position as a language researcher; a position which is broadly consistent with that of social constructionism. People necessarily exist in social contexts, and d/Discourse (see §3.5.1) and social practice similarly exist within social contexts (e.g. Foucault, 1972; Fairclough, 2001) and further construct them. This accommodates a

functional view of an individual's development which is seen as 'a social process, or a complex of social processes, and language - by virtue of its social functions - plays the key part in it' (Halliday, 1974:15). These linguistic social functions construct and are themselves constructed through the negotiation and renegotiation of linguistic conventions over time and within different sociocultural contexts. Thus threads of negotiated linguistic meaning are used and renegotiated through time and this intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1981) governs the linguistic choices from which a writer produces the specific features of a given text. The concept of genre at the site of tension between accepted social convention and expert creativity can then be regarded as the result of this historical and ongoing social process of negotiation (see §2.5 for further details). Another important point is that the resultant d/Discourses that are created through the ongoing negotiation and reconstruction of intertextual texts 'can never be neutral or value free; discourses always reflect ideologies, systems or values, beliefs and social practices' (Hicks, 1995:5). The texts will reflect their socio-historic intertextual construction and the ideologies and values embedded in them are thereby available to the researcher for study.

This research position relates to the specific methodology outlined in this chapter. With regard to teacher perspectives, my assumption is that a combined thematic analysis of the EAP teacher interviews and identification of the d/Discourses (discussed in §3.5.1) circulating amongst teachers can reveal the professional perspectives of the reading and writing practices in the China Campus context. With regard to texts, my assumption is that analyses of the rhetorical and lexicogrammatical structures of reading and writing materials will provide valuable information about the socio-cultural conventions of the social context in which they were produced. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the data related to the Exam-Practice Approach (EPA) reading and writing practices can be compared to students' target situations and that this could provide a means of measuring the relative appropriateness of the EPA. This thesis thereby represents a "multivoice' reconstruction' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:115) of the EPA reading and writing practices, and at the very least will make curriculum developers more aware of some of the issues surrounding an Exam-Practice Approach to EAP.

### 3.3 Justification for a Case Study

My overarching approach to the phenomenon being explored in this thesis and the research on which it is based is that of 'case study'. The 'case' in this study is a specific Exam-Practice Approach to teaching academic reading and academic writing on the foundation year programme at China Campus at a specific moment in its history - that is during the final year and a half of the EPA's development and operation. This is a specific context and the data collected is 'context-dependent knowledge, and the case study is especially well suited to produce this knowledge' (Flyvbjerg, 2001:72). My research questions focus on *how* teachers perceived the EPA course and *how* relevant the materials were in their contemporary real-life context. Case study as a method is widely used in studies seeking to explore the nature of a specific phenomenon:

In general, case studies are the preferred method when (a) 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed,  
(b) the investigator has little control over events, and  
(c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. (Yin, 2009:2)

This study is a single-case design featuring multiple units of analysis (Yin, 2009:46). The main areas of focus are teachers' perspectives and the texts used, with the corresponding main units of analysis being interviews and corpus-based analysis of EAP materials. These are supported by participant observation, a survey, data collected from various contextual documentary sources and analysis of the rhetorical functions of academic reading texts.

Qualitative methods are used because my first two research questions focus on the perspectives of the teacher-participants regarding their professional context. The interviewees were English teachers who had at least one years' experience delivering the Exam-Practice Approach and had been involved, to varying degrees in its development. As such, they had particular insights as to the contextual factors underpinning its development and can be considered to be key informants (Yin, 2009:107). As noted in 1.3.4, at the time of data collection the EPA was under pressure to reform from both EAP teachers and institutional upper

management, but there was no clear direction as to how such reformation should be achieved. Thus, the collection of EAP teacher perspectives was also very much supported by the institution. My own insider status as participant observer gave me direct access to EAP manager meetings where course, curriculum and assessments were planned; teacher meetings where delivery of the course, standardisation of assessment marking and materials development were discussed; and relevant interdepartmental meetings (e.g. to discuss the possibility of developing ESAP approaches). It also meant that I became a focal point for teachers who wanted to share their views of the EPA programme and suggest changes under the guarantee of anonymity afforded by my ethical issues agreement (see §3.4).

However, the locally politicised nature of the EPA and the fact that it was being challenged at the time of data collection gave rise to a specific epistemological and methodological problem in carrying out the study. This problem is that a case study should not be used 'to substantiate a preconceived position...to pursue or (worse yet) advocate particular issues' (Yin, 2009:72). In carrying out the research I therefore needed to take care that my own practitioner intuition as both writing coordinator and EAP teacher, that was that English for Specific Academic Purposes (discussed in §2.6) would be more appropriate than the EPA, would not dictate my approach or findings. For this reason, shortly after my opt-out e-mail message (see §3.4) was sent informing all EAP staff about my data collection (2010), I actively sought out alternative perspectives on the EPA by sending a follow-up e-mail (Appendix 3) to all EAP staff to encourage positive commentary on the Exam-Practice Approach. 'If the quest for contrary findings can produce documentable rebuttals, the likelihood of bias will have been reduced' (Yin, 2009:72). For the same reason, I actively sought out teachers who were likely to be more favourably inclined towards the EPA as interview participants. This explains the prominent appearance of Teacher 8 in my data (chapter 4) who I knew to have a broadly positive stance towards EPA as well as having the most insider knowledge of the development of the EPA of all interviewees (to ensure anonymity of Teacher 8, no further details can be provided).

Another potentially problematic issue facing all case study research is that of interpretation (i.e. Giddens' (1982) 'double hermeneutic'). Specifically, the issue is

that the researcher and the researched 'interact dialogically and co-inform one another within the research process' (Brogden, 2010) and therefore, the phenomenon under investigation becomes the researcher's interpretation of that phenomenon, and this includes the researcher's own impact upon the phenomenon. This interactive dimension is seen as a strength in case study research, with the interaction between researcher and research construed as a key way of generating data and understandings that would otherwise be unavailable and in this way to offer 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973:314) of a particular phenomenon. Of course the methods used need to be made transparent in order to be understood and where appropriate challenged by other researchers (see §3.5.1-3.5.3). Validity of the findings and interpretations therefore rely on this transparency. Validity is further enhanced by involving research participants in commenting on representations of findings. In this respect, the second part of the ethical issues agreement (§3.4) helps protect the validity of this research by offering the chance for colleagues to offer alternative interpretations, similar to playing devil's advocate or 'an auditor' role (Yin, 2009:45).

A further protection of validity in this study was the use of corpus-driven approaches 'based on large amounts of naturally occurring text' (Römer, 2009:147) that can therefore contribute to checking against any intuitions or preconceived ideas of the researcher, provided there is transparent selection criteria for the texts and lexis studied. The reading and writing materials lend themselves to such analysis and the results obtained can be explored alongside teacher perceptions about them to check for consistency.

### **3.4 Ethical Issues**

At the time this research was undertaken, the institution and its EAP department were facing significant internal political issues. My 'insider-outsider' relationship with EAP management meant that the early stages of my research influenced the development of the EPA, particularly materials design, and was likely a contributory factor in the internal discrediting of the approach and the opening up of dialogue between EAP teachers and departmental managers. Thus, my status as both EAP teacher/manager and researcher (the study on which this thesis is

based) was seen by EAP departmental managers as both resource and threat depending on institutional position and agenda.

Before commencing my data collection, I had a meeting (2010) with the principal to discuss the ethical implications of this study. The following agreements were made (based on BERA and BAAL guidelines: [www.bera.ac.uk](http://www.bera.ac.uk) & [www.baal.org.uk](http://www.baal.org.uk)):

1. Guarantee to make both institution and participants anonymous in published material (in the sense of 'made public').
2. Allow participants to check accuracy of findings before they are published (including material published internally within the institution as well as externally beyond China Campus).

There is a degree of futility in these two agreements, because, given the unique case of the institution, not to mention the association of my name on internet websites, absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed. This was acknowledged in the meeting with the principal and it was agreed that not naming the institution directly would suffice (the resultant *Ethical Issues Agreement* is provided in Appendix 4). Furthermore, many EAP teachers in this region of China know each other through the professional IELTS examiner network, which has around 260 members. This means that within the East China region, the reputations of the institution and managers are rapidly spread beyond the boundaries of the institution itself. Thus, any agreement to protect reputations can only minimise the extent to which they impacted beyond the institution and the IELTS East China examiner network. This being the case, one participant was concerned enough about possible repercussions within the department to request that all informants be identified as *Teacher #* rather than indicating any specific roles. The numbers attached to *Teacher* in this thesis were therefore assigned randomly and do not correspond to the institutional hierarchy of roles, the sequence of interviews or any part of the data categorisation process. To ensure this anonymity, I have deliberately not linked institutional roles to the *Teacher #* tags. In chapter 4, where the participant's role (i.e. course developer or manager) is directly relevant, I have used 'one of the course developers' or 'a manager' instead of *Teacher #*. Signed consent was obtained for interview participants using the *Ethical Issues Agreement* (Appendix 4) with space to sign consent.



Finally, at the commencement of my locally agreed data collection period within the EAP department, the Head of Department sent out an email advising EAP teachers that I would be collecting data and stating the voluntary nature of their participation (Appendix 5). I then sent out an e-mail, with the *Ethical Issues Agreement* (Appendix 4) as an attachment, to all teachers briefly explaining the research I was intending to undertake and making it clear that they could 'opt out' if they did not want to be involved (Appendix 6). This email related specifically to my intention to collect data within the EAP department through documentary and participant observation methods (see §3.5.2 & 3.5.3) and informed teachers of their right 'to withdraw from the research for any or no reason' (BERA, 2011:6; see also BAAL, 2006:4) if they did not wish to participate. The decision was made to request *opt out* rather than *opt in* so that teachers with no strong view either way would remain as potential participants, whilst those with strong concerns about local politics or who simply did not want to be involved had the opportunity to opt out before commencement of my participant observation data collection. Only two teachers did opt out in this way and no data was collected from them in my participant observation field notes. Where these teachers contributed to relevant discussions in meetings and office conversations recorded in my field notes, I have simply summarised the overall contents of such events rather than specify any individual contributions. In addition, where I documented comments from teachers who did not opt out directly in my field notes, I verbally checked with them that I had quoted them correctly. This represents an additional step in my efforts to ensure both consent and accuracy of representation beyond the notifying email and the agreed anonymity. In many cases this prompted teachers to state their position in more detail or more precisely, and in some cases they sought me out at a later date to further clarify their views.

### **3.5 Researching Teacher Perspectives**

This section sets out the methodology used for collecting and analysing the interview, documentary, survey and participant observation data. The overall aim was to document teacher perspectives of the Exam-Practice Approach. Table 3.2 summarises the participants at each stage of the data collection process. The participants of the two rounds of interviews are different EAP teachers. The time period over which data was collected was in part design (my initial focus was an

extended version of RQ1 - how the EPA had and was developing) but mostly due to the necessary shift in the focus of my study as the EPA was replaced.

**Table 3.2 - Participants, data collection methods and time period**

<b>Number of EAP Teachers</b>	<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Time period</b>
6 EAP teachers	Interview (1 <sup>st</sup> round)	EPA (12/2010)
4 EAP teachers	Interview (2 <sup>nd</sup> round)	Post-EPA (12/2011)
Approx. 35 EAP teachers at any one time (precise number fluctuated)	Participant observation (e.g. meetings and peer discussion)	EPA and Post-EPA (05/2010-12/2011)
All 10 Interview participants (from 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> rounds)	Survey	2 years after the transition from EPA to post-EPA (04/2013)

### 3.5.1. Interview Data

Interviews are particularly well suited for case studies and investigations into the perceptions of participants because ‘well informed interviewees can provide important insights’ (Yin, 2009:108) into the history and significant events in the local context, as well as helping ‘to identify other relevant sources of evidence’ (p.108). There were two rounds of interviews. The first was scheduled during the EAP period and posed questions about the past, present and future of the EAP department and programme, how it and its reading and writing practices had developed in context. EAP managers and coordinators who agreed to participate and teachers with interests, knowledge or experience in specific areas of teaching EAP were selected for the first round interviews. These areas of specific knowledge/experience included: historical contextual information from their time in the department; involvement in development of the EPA programme and/or ESAP component; attempts to introduce different pedagogic approaches (e.g. creative expression of student voice and the Academic Word List). The second round of interviews took place at the start of the post-EPA programme and the Course Developers were selected as participants. These interviewees were able to evaluate some of the preliminary findings from the previous round of interviews and to offer insights into the challenges of reconstructing the EAP programme.

Data from the second round of interviews was particularly informative regarding decisions about the materials that were intended to replace the EPA (see sections 4.3.4 and 4.3.5). Table 3.3 provides further details of interviewees' (first and second round) institutional roles, English teaching qualifications and experience. Eight held Bachelor degrees in the Social Sciences, Linguistics or English Literature, and half of the interviewees held a Masters degree in a field related to English Language teaching. In addition, two had Masters degrees and one a PhD in disciplines other than TEFL/EAP/Applied Linguistics. One interviewee came from an Engineering background. There were six female interviewees and four male. All were L1 English speakers from English-speaking countries; all except one were British. All but one were active IELTS examiners and the other had only recently become inactive.

**Table 3.3 - Interviewees' roles, qualifications and experience**

Number of Teachers /10	Highest qualifications in TEFL/EAP			Years as EAP Teacher			Position held at China Campus		
	CELTA	DELTA	Masters	<3	3-5	>5	EAP Teacher	Coordinator/ Developer	EAP Dept. Manager
	2	3	5	1	2	7	3	5	2
Details are not provided per individual participant in order to preserve each participant's anonymity within the institution.									

The invitations to interview were sent out via e-mail (Appendix 7); mutually convenient times within the normal working hours were scheduled and participants were provided with a consent form explaining my ethical issues agreement (Appendix 4), which was signed before commencement of the interview. The interviews ranged in duration from 17 to 55 minutes, with most being around 20 minutes. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. In my original transcription I used italics to indicate where interviewees emphasised words, three dots to indicate pauses and square brackets to add non-verbal cues and events, such as physical gestures or external events in the room. For presentation of the quotations in chapter 4, I have edited the original transcripts according to the transcription key provided in Appendix 8. The main differences are the use of square brackets to indicate additional words in order to clarify meaning evident

from the context but not marked in the linguistic exchange (differentiated from the non-verbal cues and external events by italics); the omission of pauses, fillers and false starts because these features are not analysed; and the use of the three dots to indicate omitted text in line with conventional transcription practice.

The interview schedules consisted of open questions with sets of expected points to be covered, functioning as prompts, designed to elicit the interviewees' perceptions of the Exam-Practice Approach (Appendix 9). I framed my initial questions 'what brought about' in an attempt to combine *how* and *why* questions rather than direct *why* questions, the latter being judged more likely to create 'defensiveness on the informant's part' (Yin, 2009:106). I used unscripted follow-up questions and prompts primarily to further explore aspects of the EPA that teachers reported to be of concern and, where relevant, to keep the focus on language and literacy teaching rather than digressing into commentary on the frequently raised topic of local management (see Appendix 10 for a list of the varied themes that emerged). This particular topic was nevertheless explored as part of the answer to research questions one and two in terms of its impact on the development and practices of the EPA programme (§4.2.1). The interview schedules were piloted through the cooperation of at least two different and independent 'critical friends' who reviewed the proposed questions to check for potentially sensitive or leading questions which were then amended accordingly. These 'critical friends' were not participants in the study but had a small measure of interest in the reliability of the results of my research. Two had been conducting research in areas related to academic writing and another had recently completed a taught master degree and was considering taking a research module.

The transcribed data were iteratively and thematically coded and categorised through a process of reading the interview transcripts and marking differences in thematic content. The analytical approach adopted involved a discourse approach, whereby specific instances of language use (discourse) are viewed as part of socially patterned uses of language (Discourse) with what Gee refers to as d/Discourse being understood as 'distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people... to enact specific socially recognizable identities engaged in specific socially recognizable activities' (Gee, 2008:154-155). The analysis of specific instances of language use, that is the

interview transcripts, involved focusing on content (what they said) and the discourse (how this was said) and then exploring possible connections with Discourses at a broader level. In this study, in identifying Discourses, those surrounding Chinese students and cultural learning ‘deficits’ (§1.3.1) are important, as are discussions surrounding the tension between ‘competency’ and ‘creativity’ (see §2.5) and debates between EGAP and ESAP (§2.6). I also draw on work by Ivanič (2004) on Discourses of writing. This notion of d/Discourse is closely related to the concept of intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1981; discussed in §2.5 and 3.2) and the premise that utterances in the present context draw on and reconstruct the d/Discourses in the past and reflect certain ideologies, values and beliefs (Hicks, 1995:5).

Work which seeks to adopt a d/Discourse approach is necessarily interpretive so in chapter four, where I am analysing teacher d/Discourses, my aim is to make clear how I am making links between specific instances and Discourses circulating in relation to academic reading and writing. For example, Teacher 5 commented:

If [classroom texts] couldn't be more related to the topics the students'll study, like business texts, economics texts that we could recycle from their subject courses...that seems better to me  
(Teacher 5)

It is clear that this utterance is supportive of d/Discourses advocating an ESAP approach (discussed in §2.6). Similarly, Teacher 12's concerns that 'we're still expected to 'teach to test' (see §4.3.6.2) is clearly related to d/Discourses surrounding the focus on passing tests or test washback (§2.3 and 2.4). However, not all utterances are so explicitly related to clearly identifiable wider Discourses and I offer an interpretation grounded in the analysis of specific instances. Therefore the transparency of my own interpretation is paramount. For example, Teacher 2 states:

Year One is falling apart at the seams. I don't even know if we've got a manager any more - feel completely detached. (Teacher 2)

This utterance explicitly relates the teacher's perceived lack of management to the experience of feelings of detachment. However, the description of Year One

'falling apart' implicitly relates these feelings of detachment to one of the key themes - separateness (see §4.3.1 & 4.3.7) - and what seems to be a highly localised d/Discourse in the China Campus context whereby the Exam-Practice Approach fails to meet teacher expectations and impacts on their perception of what constitutes a professional EAP programme. These d/Discourses are explored in greater detail in chapters 4 and 6. Whilst I theoretically adopt Gee's (2008) distinction between *d/Discourse*, throughout the remainder of this thesis I use the lower-case term *discourse*.

The intensive analysis and coding of the transcripts 'line by line, or at least paragraph by paragraph' (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009:62; see Appendix 11) follow methods of Grounded Theory (discussed further below). Key themes were identified on the basis of 'those that c[a]me up repeatedly' (Burgess, Sieminski & Arthur, 2006:84) both within and across interviews. Some teachers had an interest in specific aspects of the Exam-Practice Approach on which they commented at length, whilst other teachers (most notably Teacher 8) expressed views across a broad spectrum of themes. These were adjusted iteratively by grouping related themes to allow for broader thematic categories and were again adjusted in light of the data obtained through the later round of interviews (Appendix 10). The resultant key themes thus emerged through analytical reading and rereading of transcripts, paying particular attention to themes that recurred in the responses of interviewees. Some themes come directly from my interview questions whilst others were offered more spontaneously from the participants themselves. The thematic categories were then assigned to the relevant research questions and thereby less relevant categories and those that would be in conflict with my ethical issues agreement were excluded from this thesis. The categories constructed from the key themes (Appendix 10) provide the structure for presentation of the data in the next chapter.

Whilst the method of thematic coding and categorisation draws on that of Grounded Theory, including the use of memos and diagrams to help identify the relationships between categories (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009:68), it differs in that there was no intention of reducing the data to one core category or 'theory' (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009:68). Relationships between the categories are acknowledged in chapter 4 and it could be argued that separateness, randomness

and purposeless (§4.3.7), when combined, represent the category to which most others are connected. The same risks that apply to Grounded Theory - that it creates trivial knowledge or belabours the obvious (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009:69) - also apply to my own study but an important motive for undertaking this research was precisely that what may be obvious to participants in the research context may not be so obvious to the wider research community or even to policy makers in the same context (i.e. institutional and even EAP departmental managers). Indeed, it cannot even be assumed that all the phenomena observed in the research context are obvious to the participants themselves.

Once the data had been ordered in thematic categories according to the research questions, I invited participants to check the accuracy of findings by sending them draft sections of chapter four where data from their interviews was quoted. This 'verification' (Miles & Huberman, 1984:23) fulfils the requirements of my ethical issues agreement (§3.4) and also helps to increase the reliability this study (§3.3). All interview participants either confirmed that they were satisfied with the accuracy of my reporting or requested amendments or deletions, which were revised accordingly. Thus, the categories, and therefore the corresponding sections in chapter four, can be considered to be comprehensible to the participants in the research context (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009:62). In hindsight, it might have proved beneficial to have asked participants to review the transcript of their interview so they could make amendments or highlight points that they considered to be most important, which could then be used to inform or even lead my process of categorisation (discussed further in 6.3).

### 3.5.2. Documentary Data

Documentary evidence was collected, including: relevant e-mail communication (mostly those associated with materials/lesson plan release, assignment marking criteria, meeting minutes and inter-departmental communication), Schemes of Work, course materials, programme guidelines, syllabuses and amendments, and two contemporary departmental surveys. I draw on such data in chapter 4 'to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources' (Yin, 2009:103). Where relevant (e.g. emails featuring teacher perspectives), printed versions of the

documentary data were categorised using the results of the methods used to categorise the interview transcripts (§3.5.1). The documentary data, however, was not used to determine the categories because there was too much material to be handled for the purposes of this study, much of which was not relevant to the research questions. For example, internal work-related emails throughout the period of data collection amounted to hundreds of texts on a wide range of departmental, inter-departmental and external issues. To use such data as the basis for identifying thematic categories would also have created serious complications regarding criteria for the selection of texts for inclusion whilst ensuring the analysis remained focused on teachers' perspectives.

### 3.5.3. Participant Observation

Field notes based on participant observation were kept during the period of the study (05/2010-12/2011). These include the careful recording of teacher commentary (with verbal permission, see section 3.4); conversations with managers, faculty staff and students; meetings notes; my own experiences as a teacher, coordinator and examiner; and my theory-led reflections (my own reflective work informs the description of the research context (sections 1.2 & 1.3) but is not drawn on in chapters 4 and 5). Meetings ranged from informal discussions between teachers about specific lessons or materials to formal meetings of teachers in the various skills groups, EAP manager/coordinator meetings, full departmental meetings (usually for assessment standardisation purposes) or interdepartmental meetings to discuss possible moves towards ESAP. These notes were written down and dated in notebooks (Figure 3.1) during and/or shortly after the events which they record took place and, where specific teachers were identified (i.e. *Teacher #*) and quoted, verbal permission was sought at the same time as the teacher checked my notes for accuracy. As noted in section 3.4, this had the benefit of enabling teachers to clarify their comments and, where they felt it to be necessary to offer further explanation. There is considerable overlap between my field notes and documentary data (§3.5.2) such as meeting minutes and the emails some teachers sent me in response to my e-mails advising of my research and requesting positive perspectives (see §3.3 & 3.4; Appendices 3 & 7).



Figure 3.1 - Sample of my field notes



The numbering sequence that I used to maintain the anonymity of the teachers was determined by the order in which numbers were attributed to data from specific teachers in my field notes. In other words, a new teacher (in terms of contributing data) was given the next numerical value so the numbers represent nothing more than the chronological order in which teachers contributed to the participant observation method of data collection. Thus, the numbers assigned to the participants help to maintain anonymity because they do not identify participant status as interviewee or their role within the institution, nor do they indicate the order of the interviews. It would not be possible to work out this numbering system without access to my field notes. I have therefore used these same numbers to assign quoted extracts to teachers in this thesis. A total of 18 teachers were assigned numbers in my field notes, representing just over 50% of all teachers in the research context and of these 12 are explicitly cited in this thesis. The gender ratio of males to females was roughly equal throughout the period of data collection and the male to female ratio of participants cited in this thesis is 5:7. Teachers came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and ten different nationalities were represented - American, Australian, British, Chinese, Ethiopian, Filipino, Irish, New Zealander, Polish, Surinamer (not all of these people were present throughout the whole period of data collection, and the majority were British or American). All teachers had at least an English-medium bachelor degree and a CELTA or equivalent initial EFL teaching qualification. It must be noted that

whilst these teachers all played a role in the local context and, it can be assumed, influenced the local discourses, not all of them contributed to the data presented in chapter four.

The participant observation and documentary evidence described above was important in developing my own insight and awareness of the context of the study. However they are given limited explicit attention in this thesis and are only drawn on to enhance the interview and materials analysis data where relevant. There is one exception - section 4.4 - where primarily documentary data from faculty is presented to provide further important details of the wider China Campus context where these are relevant to this study. Where I quote from my field notes, it is marked in the corresponding reference as 'PO Notes', indicating participant observation.

#### 3.5.4. Survey

An electronic survey was conducted (04/2013) using *Survey Monkey* (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P5W76GT>) online tools with the aim of recording participant views on issues raised through the research process. This allowed the participants from the first round of interviews to comment on issues raised in the second round of interviews and for all participants to comment on the specific corpus-driven categories. The survey was constructed and trialled at my new workplace (I was working at a different and unrelated institution at this time) before being sent to all ten interview participants by email collector. This is a *Survey Monkey* tool allowing a personalised email invitation to be efficiently sent to participants whereby the identity of respondents is recorded for the researcher but is not traceable publically, thus maintaining anonymity. A copy of the survey questions with responses is provided in appendix 12. All ten interviewees responded (as shown in Table 3.2 above) and I entered into email discussions with two teachers to clarify comments they had made in the survey (all other responses were clear). The results from this survey and the follow-up emails are used, like my participant observation field notes data, to enhance the interview and materials analysis findings as appropriate and, where used, marked in the corresponding reference as 'survey'.

The data collection and analytical methods described in this section aim to answer RQs 1 and 2. They were also used to inform the selection criteria for lexis to focus on in the corpus analysis (see below).

### 3.6 Text Analysis

The text analysis of EPA materials aims to answer the third research question:

*What does an analysis of the Exam-Practice Approach reading and writing input materials reveal about their lexis and functional purpose?*

In order to answer this question, three approaches to text analysis are used in this thesis - Key word analysis (KWA), Key word in Context (KWIC) and analysis of rhetorical functions - focusing on different sub-questions as shown in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 - Mapping methods to research questions**

Sub-question	Methods
RQ3a) How relevant is the vocabulary encountered in the Exam-Practice Approach materials to target situation (academic discipline) writing?	Key word Analysis Key word in Context concordancing
RQ3b) To what extent is the language taught in the academic writing class encountered in the academic reading material?	Key word Analysis Manual analysis of Rhetorical Functions and Structures

Intuitions about language do not always accurately reflect observed usage (Sinclair, 1991:4) and corpus-driven approaches identify statistical frequencies and patterns of lexical features of actual language modeled in selected texts (section 2.10). Such an approach therefore provides an important alternative view of the EPA to enhance the interview data, and the questions in Table 3.4 were specifically designed and constructed for this purpose. Of course, the actual usage of materials in class might differ between teachers and to the intended usage stated on text itself - distinguishing '*between materials as they are and materials-in-action*' (Harwood, 2014:11). My focus in this thesis centres primarily on the former.

### 3.6.1. Corpus Rationale and Development

As noted in chapter 2, the EPA attempt to teach academic reading and writing as preparation for IELTS-like exams is problematized in the literature (e.g. Green, 2005; Moore & Morton, 2005). This suggests that the EPA texts are likely to be inadequate models of academic reading and writing, and that this will be reflected in the lexis - the words, multi-word sequences and collocations (see §2.4 & 2.8). This, however, cannot simply be assumed. The EPA materials had undergone a five year selection process specific to the institution (Table 1.2) and there was a level of specificity in that 14 (of 67) texts had been classified as distinctly BIZ or ENG. Thus, whilst it could be hypothesised that there would be great differences in the lexical composition of the EPA materials and target situation reference corpora, this hypothesis remained open to investigation. A corpus-driven analysis 'aims to derive linguistic categories systematically from the recurrent patterns and the frequency distributions that emerge from language in context' (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001:87). A corpus-driven approach, in contrast to a corpus-based approach, has no *a priori* assigned categories and is therefore an appropriate method to check hypotheses about language use. Using Key Word Analysis (KWA) the keyness of the words in the EPA corpus can be identified, that is lexis that occurs significantly more or less often in the EPA corpora than the reference corpora (see *Keyness* below).

My corpus-driven research focuses on the EPA reading and writing materials, which were divided into two corpora by subject (BIZ and ENG). A reference corpus was needed so that my exploration of the frequencies of lexis in the BIZ and ENG corpora could be compared to established corpora that would represent target situation texts.

### 3.6.2. Selection of Reference Corpora

Two reference corpora were required - one representing the target situation for the local students' writing and one representing target reading. The target situation writing is undergraduate academic writing for UK universities in the Business, Economics and Engineering disciplines; target reading includes disciplinary textbooks, class hand-outs and lecture *PowerPoint* slides. Ideally the EPA

materials would have been compared to reference corpora constructed from local disciplinary texts from years 2-4 of the China Campus undergraduate programmes or texts taken from the nine partner universities (see section 1.3 for further contextual details), but this was precluded by practical and political contextual constraints. Thus alternatives were sought.

A reference corpus of target situation student writing exists in the form of the British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus, which consists of roughly equal numbers of positively assessed student assignments from first year undergraduate to Masters level across four disciplinary groupings (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:8). BAWE can be filtered to include only undergraduate Business and Economics texts (BE-BAWE) or Engineering texts (ENG-BAWE). These filtered BAWE corpora were used to represent the target situation writing of BIZ and ENG students respectively. However, since the target situation texts are student writing and not classroom materials, the EPA corpora and filtered BAWE are not exactly like for like (discussed further below). Nevertheless, the use of BAWE as a reference corpus can be justified on the grounds that it reveals items that are present in academic writing (i.e. featured in BAWE) but are absent from the EPA, which would be indicative of the extent to which the EPA materials model target academic writing texts. With this in mind, the KWA included a negative KWA - the words that represent keyness in the filtered BAWE but are not strongly featured in the EPA corpora. Furthermore, the extent to which taught AW lexis is reproduced in disciplinary undergraduate writing was observed, and the dispersion of lexis across the EPA texts indicated lexical relationships between the AR and AW materials.

There was no equivalent to BAWE for academic reading and although my study included construction and analysis of a subject textbook corpus (see section 6.4 for further details), this could not be considered to be an accurate representation of target disciplinary reading so was excluded from this thesis. Therefore, the data derived through KWA that is presented in chapter 5 is an incomplete analysis of the EPA materials as it does not indicate relative lexical keyness in comparison to an established academic reading corpus. Inferences can be made from the KWA using BAWE but 'the academic writing in student assignments is different in nature

from that in textbooks...[because they] have different social purposes' (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:23).

### 3.6.3. Corpus Design and Construction

The design and composition of a corpus should be documented fully with information about the contents and arguments in justification of the decisions taken.

(Sinclair, 2004, <http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/documents/creating/dlc/chapter1.htm>)

Sinclair (2004) provides three broad considerations for the design and construction of corpora- orientation, criteria and nature/dimensions of the samples. The following sub-sections are presented in the same sequential order.

#### **3.6.3.1. Orientation**

Orientation refers to the language or variety to be sampled in the corpus (Sinclair, 2004) and is in effect the guiding principle for the design of a corpus. The crucial point is that '[o]nly those components of corpora which have been designed to be independently contrastive should be contrasted' (Sinclair, 2004) so it is necessary that the aims of the corpus design are clearly understood before any contrastive work is carried out. This corpora design had four main aims:

1. to identify keyness and negative keyness of the EPA materials in comparison to the reference corpora
2. to explore the extent to which AW taught lexis is used in target undergraduate writing
3. to help explore the extent to which AW taught lexis is modelled in the EPA reading input material (excluding instructional content and classroom tasks/questions)
4. to enable a degree of comparison between the EPA and the target situation writing requirements in terms of lexis, text structure and purpose

Thus the intention was to develop small corpora representing the EPA Business Studies and Economics (BIZ) and Engineering (ENG) materials for contrastive

purposes with BAWE similarly filtered for Business Studies and Economics (BE-BAWE) and Engineering (ENG-BAWE).

### **3.6.3.2. Criteria for selection of texts**

The criteria for selection of texts for inclusion in corpora are extremely important and '[c]orpora should be designed and constructed exclusively on external criteria' (Clear, 1992) because selection of sample texts on the basis of the phenomena to be studied would be self-defeating. This 'rules out topic as a source of corpus criteria...[and] vocabulary is clearly an internal criterion' (Sinclair, 2004). In the present study, the focus is on the EPA reading and writing teaching materials so a very simple criterion for the EPA corpus was to include only materials from the AR and AW classes. Another very clear and simple criterion was by academic stream and the division of the EPA corpus into the BIZ and ENG corpora. This is consistent with Sinclair's (2004) directive that, 'The corpus designer should choose criteria that are easy to establish...and they should be of a fairly simple kind...because errors in classification can invalidate...research projects and important findings' (Sinclair, 2004). Whilst these criteria are sufficient to meet the aims of this study, they meant that text types that fell under the institutional jurisdiction of disciplinary subject, Speaking or Listening classes were excluded. It should therefore be borne in mind that the students typically received a much greater amount of textual input, both subject-related and random topics, than the material included in my BIZ and ENG corpora. Therefore, the study on which this thesis is based provides an incomplete picture of the reading and writing input that students receive within this institution, and makes no comment on encounters they may have with English outside the institution (e.g. in entertainment or social activities). Its value lies in the detailed description it provides of classroom texts that were intended to raise non-*gaokao* students' awareness of the kinds of reading and writing expected of them at UK universities and were explicitly taught as academic reading and writing.

Furthermore, only AW and AR texts locally designated as *Core* were used, and all *Supplementary* texts, extra resources and archived folders were ignored. This increases the likelihood that the EPA corpora are representative of the texts actually used in class. Coursework and practice exams were included. Answer

keys were excluded from the corpus analysis because they mostly consisted of multiple choice letters and isolated words out of context.

The portfolio (see section 1.3) is excluded from the corpus analysis because of the enormous amount of highly repetitive material with many local acronyms. This was an additional part of the Academic Writing programme (i.e. extra material to cover on top of reading for writing, and writing practice) and although reading was explicitly included in its assessment criteria, there were no associated reading texts. The material consisted of checklists guiding student reflection.

### **3.6.3.3. *Nature and Dimensions of the Samples***

The texts included in the EPA corpora represent the Year One EPA AW and AR input materials following the criteria above. For construction of the BIZ and ENG corpora, a text refers to whole reading passages (from both AR and AW course materials) of continuous text, excluding the instructional language (and readings that were essentially lists of instructional study skills advice), institution-specific headers and footers, comprehension questions and classroom tasks because such textual elements (e.g. multiple-choice answers and gap-fills) would clearly not be a feature of the BAWE reference corpora. In the majority of cases the texts included in the EPA corpora are consistent with the distinct *Word/pdf* file in the original local folder on the shared drive that EAP teachers accessed to retrieve the materials. This provides a ready-made local definition of 'a text' consistent with the argument that '[s]amples of language for a corpus should wherever possible consist of entire documents' (Sinclair, 2004), and issues of researcher interference are minimised. However, where one *Word/pdf* file contained multiple reading passages that were thematically and topically unrelated, I divided the passages into separate text files for inclusion. These 'split' texts included the AR exam papers (each were divided into three text files) and the AW coursework packs. This division 'considers the (pragmatic) criterion of plausible independence of the parts' (Heuboeck, Holmes & Nesi, 2005:20) and ensured that each corpus 'text' was a topically coherent whole. It also meant that I was better able to identify specific reading passages during the analytical process, which was important because a corpus may contain texts that are atypical of the corpus as a whole, just as 'there are bizarre and unrepresentative [lexical] instances in any corpus'



(Sinclair, 1991:5). There were also several original *Word/pdf* texts that had multiple topically related short passages separated by instructional language and tasks. These were kept together as one text file because once the instructional language was removed they resembled a thematically and intertextually complete reference text with intuitive likeness to a textbook.

The resultant EPA corpora texts were converted from their original *Word/pdf* format to *txt* files in Unicode. The files were given coded names that indicated whether they were from AW or AR materials, semester one or semester two and were numbered chronologically according to their location in the local scheme of work. For example, the text coded as belonging to *AR-Semester One-Week 10-a* is one of the two reading passages on the topic of DNA (see Appendix 1). These *txt* files were then imported into *Wordsmith Tools* (see section 3.6.4.1) and converted into frequency-based wordlists that could then be used to conduct key word analyses. The same files and software were also used for producing the concordance lines used for key word in context analysis (see section 3.6.4.3).

A minor issue with the EPA corpora is that visual data including words embedded in visual data form (e.g. *jpeg*) were excluded. This is a technical limitation because graphics files cannot be interpreted by text analysis software except through the use of tags (e.g. *<figure>*) and whatever is placed in the tag would require advanced categorization so would thereby be excluded from the corpus-driven study. These limitations are present in other corpora, including BAWE. In practice the dearth of such visual data in the EPA corpora meant the impact of such an omission was negligible and lexis unaccounted for due to the digital format only consisted of one whole sentence that was part of an image - 'Can't you do anything right?' - and, for ENG only, the 31 words making up four bullet points and the title of the *Islay Wave Power Station* diagram (see Appendix 13).

Table 3.5 shows an overview of the comparative lengths of texts making up the EPA and reference corpora. More details of the contents of each corpus are provided in the subsections below. Business Studies and Economics texts are combined in the BE-BAWE corpus following the local combination of Business and Economics in the one BIZ stream. Similarly, the ENG-BAWE corpus includes all Engineering papers, covering electrical, mechanical and so on. The ENG students

are divided according to such specialisms from Year Two onwards but the specific pathway they choose would not be known while they were in Year One. In other words, the specificity of the target situation was limited to the field of Engineering generally.

**Table 3.5 - Comparative overview of the EPA and reference corpora**

Corpora	Number of Texts	Number of Words	Mean Text Length (in words)	Mean Sentence Length (in words)
(EPA) BIZ	67	41,142	596.26	18.55
(EPA) ENG	67	39,228	585.49	18.52
BE-BAWE	179	373,135	2084.55	21.57
ENG-BAWE	184	400,382	2118.42	21.35
All figures obtained through WordSmith Tools except number of texts.				

#### **3.6.3.4. Nature and Dimensions of the EPA Corpora (BIZ & ENG)**

Table 3.6 shows the number of texts and overall word counts that make up the ENG and BIZ corpora. This data was generated through Cobbs' *VocabProfile* ([www.lex tutor.ca/vp](http://www.lex tutor.ca/vp)) and *WordSmith Tools* (details in section 3.6.4.1).

*VocabProfile* helpfully classifies the words according to two well established word lists: West's (1953) General Service List (GSL) and the AWL with the remaining categorized as 'off-list' words (discussed in 2.8). From this it is clear to see that the majority of words are on the GSL, which is consistent with the relative longevity of the GSL as a functional wordlist and the 'common-core hypothesis' in that the most frequent words in English texts are going to be encountered in appropriate texts regardless of specific topic content. The AWL vocabulary, comprising around 8-10% of words in BIZ and ENG, is consistent with the range of AWL vocabulary Miller (2011) identified in university textbooks, as opposed to EFL textbooks, and is therefore at the appropriate level for a course purporting to move students from an EFL background to academic English. However, this says nothing of the coverage and distribution of the AWL words or Durrant's (2009) critique from a collocational perspective.

**Table 3.6 - Counts of texts and words comprising BIZ and ENG corpora**

EPA Corpora	Number of Texts	Number of Words (tokens)	Frequency Counts %		
			K1 + K2 (GSL)	AWL	Off-List
BIZ	67	41,142	82.32	7.00	10.68
ENG	67	39,228	81.40	6.94	11.66

Both BIZ and ENG corpora contain 48 AR texts and 19 AW texts.

- The *EPA-AR* texts are consistently one main reading passage of approximately 500-800 words
- The *EPA-AW* texts vary in length and format but average around 590 words

Where relevant, the structure of specific texts and the multiple reading passages some contained were taken into consideration when conducting KWIC analysis (see below).

Fifty-three texts are shared by both BIZ and ENG students and would have been encountered in the same week of study so for much of the AR and AW courses there was little difference along disciplinary lines. There are 14 texts that were separate and specifically designated BIZ or ENG, of which six are related to the coursework assignments (see section 1.3).

### **3.6.3.5. Nature and Dimensions of the Filtered BAWE Corpora (BE-BAWE & ENG-BAWE)**

Table 3.5 shows the number of words and texts that contribute the filtered BAWE corpora (BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE). These were filtered to include only undergraduate papers in the specific disciplines. I wanted the filtered BAWE reference corpora to represent as wide a selection of genres as possible because the EPA was intentionally non-specific and the genres of its contributory texts had not been categorized, with the exception of 'The Essay' identified in local AW and BIZ teaching content (see §4.4, Table 4.1) and 'essay types' (Appendix 14). All thirteen genre families (Appendix 2) were therefore included in BE-BAWE and

ENG-BAWE. Three genre types are given particular attention in chapter 5 as they commonly occur in Engineering, Economics and Business Studies - Methodology Recounts, Design Specifications and Problem Questions - but their meaning may be opaque so I also provide brief definitions in Appendix 2. Although the number of Essay texts in BE-BAWE suggests similarity to BIZ, the two corpora cannot be assumed to approximate each other in terms of the range of genres. Since the genre types of the AR passages are unknown (beyond the vague description 'IELTS-like'), a major goal of this study is to ascertain whether the BIZ and ENG texts are sufficiently similar to the reference corpora to provide relevant reading for EAP in the China Campus context, and to test the theoretical assumption that they are not. This is part of the purpose of creating and establishing a corpus against which other corpora can be compared because:

with the globalization and internationalization of higher education there is a value in describing and explaining the genres of writing in one context, to inform any future comparisons and developments with other contexts that are removed in time or place. (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:6)

BAWE was not filtered by university so BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE represent a range of UK universities, which offers some similarity to the target situation of the Year One students but does not dovetail precisely to the target partner universities.

### 3.6.4. Methods of Text Analysis

#### **3.6.4.1. Software**

The data surrounding AWL lexis (see Table 3.6 and section 5.2.5) was generated through Cobb's online *Vocabprofile* (<http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/eng/>). The corpus comparisons - lexical frequencies, KWA and concordancing - were undertaken using *WordSmith Tools* (version 5.0.0334), which is efficient and useful for exploring 'word combinations that are used by the discourse community of a specific register or registers' (Ari, 2006:36). Two well-known methods of data retrieval and interpretation that are used in corpus linguistics are frequency profiling and concordancing (Rayson, 2008:520). The first of these methods includes key word analysis (p.523), which is the widely cited approach that

identifies the relative keyness of words in a text, and concordancing is used for the analysis of Key word in Context (defined below, §3.6.4.3).

#### **3.6.4.2. Keyness**

Keyness is useful because it 'give[s] a good indication of the text's "aboutness" (Scott, 2010:166). It is an attribute of words and lexical bundles that occur more (positive keyness) or less (negative keyness) frequently 'than would be expected by chance in comparison with the reference corpus' (Scott, 2010:166). *WordSmith Tools* computes the keyness of an item by cross-tabulating:

1. *its frequency in the small wordlist [i.e. word types listed by frequency of occurrence in the corpus; not to be confused with teaching word lists like the AWL]*
2. *the number of running words in the small wordlist*
3. *its frequency in the reference corpus*
4. *the number of running words in the reference corpus* (Scott, 2010:168)

This calculation uses the Log Likelihood test (Dunning, 1993), 'which gives a better estimate of keyness [than the chi-square test of significance with Yates correction for a 2 X 2 table], especially when contrasting long texts or a whole genre against [the] reference corpus' (Scott, 2010:168). I opted to use the default *p* value (max. 0.000001), which is relatively conservative and thus concerns over the risk of erroneous relationships being identified are negligible.

Some words may be identified as key due to their high frequency on a few texts and may be atypical of the corpus as whole. To ensure that the key words to be discussed are representative of the corpus, their distribution across texts needs to be considered. In this study, I included key words that occurred in seven or more EPA texts, which means they appeared in a minimum of 10.5% of the texts that constitute the EPA corpora. Since raw counts are difficult to compare because the corpora differ in size, relative figures were calculated for discussion in chapter 5: frequencies of words are normalized per thousand words (ptw) and distribution across texts is given as a percentage.

As noted in section 2.10, KWA has been used to demonstrate disciplinary specificity in academic texts (Hyland, 2009; Durrant, 2009), to compare EFL and university textbooks (Miller, 2011) and to inform work identifying and exploring genres (Nesi & Gardner, 2012; Flowerdew, 2005). It has allowed researchers to identify differences in undergraduate L1 Chinese students' disciplinary writing compared to their L1 English counterparts (Leedham, 2011:5), and has been combined with other methods, for example conversation analysis to explore interaction patterns and language use in small group sessions in university settings (O'Keeffe & Walsh, 2014:164-167). It has even been used to reduce the interpretative subjectivity of Critical Discourse Analysis (O'Halloran, 2012:92-93). My use of this method is to provide quantitative evidence to enhance the interview data in one specific area - the reading and writing materials used in the China Campus EPA teaching context.

#### **3.6.4.3. Key Word in Context (KWIC)**

In seeking to show how language is used in context, focusing only on frequency of word appearance is insufficient; *how* words are used and *where* they appear in the overall organisational structure of a text is also important. For this purpose concordance lines can be used to conduct Key Word in Context (KWIC) analyses. KWIC analyses enable researchers (and by extension EAP teachers and their students) the ability to see how an identified key word is used in the context of the running text in which it appears. Thus it is through KWIC that the definitions of *lexis* (words, word strings and collocations) and *lexicogrammar* (systems of words and their arrangement) overlap and demonstrate actual usage of keywords, lexical strings, associated collocations and grammatical structures. This allows intuitions about rhetorical function associations between lexis, text organisation and writer's purpose to be checked. Such analyses provide a deeper understanding of lexicogrammatical features and the results might then be of greater benefit to course developers than simple frequency counts. Indeed, Mudraya (2005:244) lists this as one of the most persuasive reasons for using corpora in the development of teaching materials and Ballance (2012) argues this can help to link notions of genre in EAP with appropriate forms of vocabulary testing (see §2.10.1).

It was not feasible to conduct a KWIC analysis for every keyword identified by *WordSmith Tools*. I therefore narrowed the focus to those words that occurred a minimum of 20 times, resulting in the KW lists provided in Appendix 15. Coupled with the minimum dispersion across a minimum of seven EPA texts, this gives a typical 'aboutness' of the EPA materials. I then grouped and categorized the words on the KW lists, prioritising words ranked as most key (or negatively key). To further inform the categorization and grouping of key words for KWIC analysis, I prioritized items that connected with other methods of data collection in this study using the following two criteria:

- explicitly taught in AW teaching materials (i.e. a focus of classroom writing exercises; see Appendix 16)
- repeated more often and/or given a greater depth of attention in the interviews (see for example, quotes Q65 & Q66, p.136)

For example, personal pronouns were especially prominent because they appear at the top of KWA lists, were raised as an issue by two teachers in the interviews (one in some depth) and were featured repeatedly in AW teaching materials (Appendix 16).

### 3.6.5. Genre and Rhetorical Functions

An important assumption of EAP is that the texts studied 'not only describe linguistic features of language varieties but also their communicative purposes and effects' (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010:42). In this respect, a corpus-based approach alone is limited and the researcher needs to look at the organisation and purpose of the whole text by considering genre and rhetorical function. Used in an educational context, this can help students to understand how 'linguistic features are connected to social context and function' (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010:42). Since the rhetorical functions of reading texts were not explicitly stated and there were no tasks requiring their consideration in the AR materials, this was worth investigating because the separate reading texts that were introduced in the AR classes represented the majority of EAP input of cohesive running text. These texts include the AR texts that formed part of the BIZ and ENG corpora for my

corpus-driven work, and the instructional reading materials that were excluded from the corpus analyses (KWA and KWIC) on the basis that they were inappropriate for such comparative analysis (§3.6.3.3). Indeed, a minimal analysis of rhetorical functions was necessary in order to identify such reading materials that needed to be excluded from the corpus analyses. The reading input locally classified as belonging to Academic Writing is excluded from the rhetorical functions analysis because most of the material was specifically selected or written to exemplify the textual organisation (or essay types) taught in AW class (see Appendices 14 and 20).

An analysis of the rhetorical functions of the reading passages was conducted following Alexander et al's (2008:48-52) method that 'involves looking at the *non-content* language of the text and using this to identify the main rhetorical function and any supporting functions' (p.50). Alexander et al (2008:51-52) provide a detailed example in tabulated format which is a helpful model for undertaking such analysis, and I have partially reproduced this table in Appendix 17. This method was adopted in preference to a full genre analysis using Swales' (1990) 'moves' method because its operation at the paragraph level had the benefit of closely matching the paragraph-based approaches to writing instruction in local BIZ and AW classes (see Appendix 20 and Table 4.1).

Alexander et al (2008) provide a system of classifying rhetorical functions according to 'three macro-functions' (p.49):

- describe (e.g. narrative, instruction)
- explain (e.g. comparison, definition, cause and effect)
- persuade (e.g. problem/solution, argument, evidence and conclusions)

Using this system of classification and, where necessary, extending it to better reflect local AW practices (e.g. the classification of *introduction* as a paragraph level macro-function and *thesis statement* or *restatement of thesis* as rhetorical functions within paragraphs), rhetorical functions were identified within paragraphs and macro-function labels assigned to each paragraph (Alexander et al, 2008:48) of the AR materials (see Appendix 19 for sample). Where terminology differed between Alexander et al's (2008) analytical models and the local AW teaching



materials, I favoured the latter in my own labelling of the AR reading materials' rhetorical functions (see Appendices 19 & 20) in order to make the similarities and differences between AR input and AW teaching practice clearer. Examples of these local labels include the macro-functions *introduction* and *conclusion* where analysis identified an entire paragraph dedicated to that function, and *example* which can operate as rhetorical function within an explanatory paragraph or as a macro-function in its own right where a whole paragraph functions as an example (see §4.4, Table 4.1). The organisation of information in each reading text was thereby expressed in terms of these identified rhetorical functions (Appendix 18) and these were then compared to the taught rhetorical functions in the EPA writing materials (Appendix 20). The results of this analysis of rhetorical functions contribute a small part of the analysis of materials data presented in chapter 5.

Finally, the importance of non-lexical elements of academic texts was identified in the literature review (§2.11) and is raised in the data in chapters 4 and 5. The UKHQ syllabus explicitly states that the 'academic reading strand should cover...using a text to produce or complete a diagram or to produce or complete a table/graph' (p.13). However, analysis of such non-lexical features in the EPA materials is not included in this thesis and I include mention of it here because it may represent a very useful avenue for further research in the China Campus context (see §6.3).

### **3.7 Summary**

My overarching approach is that of case study and the case is the Exam-Practice Approach programme at China Campus at a specific moment in its history. My study sought to explore two phenomena - teacher perspectives and textual teaching materials used in the programme - using specific methodologies. Teacher perspectives are explored through interviews enhanced through participant observation, documentary evidence and survey data (chapter 4). The textual analysis includes corpus-driven approaches and analysis of rhetorical functions of reading passages (chapter 5). The two sets of data (teacher perceptions and text analyses) are drawn together in consideration of research question four (chapter 6).

## 4. Exploring the Exam-Practice Approach: Teacher Perspectives

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents teacher perspectives of the Exam-Practice Approach based on their experiences in delivering the EPA course. This chapter is structured around research questions 1 and 2 (§1.4) using key thematic categories drawn from analysis of the data. The analysis draws centrally on the interview data but also includes other qualitative data, such as documentary sources, comments from the survey and my participant observation notes (Table 3.2). Most quoted extracts come from the transcribed interview data (transcription key provided in Appendix 8) and are attributed to participants using the randomised method of numbering teachers as explained in section 3.5.3. Ten of the teachers were interview participants (randomly numbered) and the views of three other EAP teachers based on participation observation and documentary data are also presented. Relevant data collected from faculty via documentary evidence or participant observation is provided in §4.4. Where quotations are from other sources (e.g. email survey or notes made during participant observation) this is indicated; notes from participant observation are abbreviated to *PO Notes*. All quotations from teachers presented as indented paragraphs, regardless of data source, are prefaced in this thesis with *Quotation#* and are cross-referenced in my writing as *Q#* to make it easier for readers to locate specific quotations that I refer to. The chapter focuses both on what teachers say and the discourses that are used.

The chapter begins by focusing on RQ1 - *What key contextual factors did teachers perceive as influencing the development of the Exam-Practice Approach?* The data which includes interview, documentary evidence and participant observation, provides rich understanding of the EPA context in the words of those involved, with Teacher 8 being a key informant (as described in §3.3), and identifies some of the factors perceived to have led to the EPA. The focus is on the following key

themes that emerged from the data: *Local management; technological resources; time constraints; the student body: non-gaokao students* (Appendix 10).

The chapter continues by focusing on RQ2 - *What are the views of teachers and managers of the Exam-Practice Approach to teaching academic reading and writing?* The following key themes emerged from the data: *Programme structure; materials design; vocabulary, reading and AWL; course book/textbook; subject-specific relevance and ESAP; assessment* (Appendix 10). I close this section with a focus on three closely related macro themes that encapsulate the main issues raised across the data: *separateness, randomness and purposelessness*.

The chapter concludes with a summary drawing together the main findings that will be further discussed in chapter 6.

## **4.2 Teachers' perspectives on the contextual factors influencing the Exam-Practice Approach**

### **4.2.1. Local Management**

The data presented in this subsection indicate that teachers view the local management as impacting on the development of the EPA in three main ways: how the institution was founded; the relations between macro-managers (founding owner, principal and deans) and departmental managers (EAP and the disciplinary subjects); and the direct involvement of EAP departmental managers. In order to understand the development of the EPA, teachers emphasized that it is important to understand the aims of the original owner of the company:

*Quotation 1.* when you're looking at the origins of the school, you've got to look at who opened it, what their motives would have been (Teacher 8)

Teacher 8 suggested that these original motives may have primarily been 'to make money'. This possible motive was expressed in some detail by one of the former managers who related this to other themes presented in this chapter - the relatively low English proficiency of students (4.2.4), inadequate technological

resources (4.2.2) and the issue of textbooks (4.3.4) - and explicitly relates this to poor staff morale:

*Quotation 2.* to pump up the annual profit in order to inflate the figure [the institution's founder] was going to receive from [selling the company], he went against the [UKHQ] operations manual and let in...unqualified students who didn't speak English...He also refused to invest any money into facilities, technology, books... All the academic problems at [China Campus] start because of [the founder's] decision to reduce his costs and increase the tuition base so that he could have a big pay-day...The damage it did to the staff morale, the reputation of [this institution], and the relationship with the [local] managers and [UKHQ] was something that I think still carries on today. (former manager, email, 2010)

This is consistent with McArdle and Clinton's (2008:5) observation that, in situations where administrators channel students through programmes to gain funding, the commercialisation of education risks devaluing qualifications and alienating educators (see §1.3.3). This point was supported by Teacher 2's reflection:

*Quotation 3.* When I did A-levels, universities were like hallowed halls to aspire to. Now we're just so cynical - they're just little companies money-grabbing.

It should be noted that the two time references referred to here (when the teacher studied A-levels and 'now') are divided by the 1998 introduction of means-tested tuition fees in the UK and the subsequent raising of the tuition fees threshold (see for example Alley & Smith, 2004). Similarly, such concerns regarding the commercialisation of tertiary education are consistent with the notion that this may be particularly problematic in the context of educational institutions operating in China due to pressure from fee-paying parents who may hold very different perceptions of education (discussed in §1.3.7).

When the institution was first established in 2006, 'they basically then just shipped in people who they thought could run it' (Teacher 8). For the EAP department, this resulted in employment of English teachers who often had little or no experience in teaching EAP, as Teacher 10 explained:

*Quotation 4.* All the teachers who were here were all, basically, at the same level of seniority and taking the lead from the coordinator in [an]other centre...just about everybody had never seen that programme before and there was a steep learning curve to go through. (Teacher 10)

It was from this pool of teachers that the EAP departmental managers were selected. The difficulties faced by these relatively inexperienced departmental managers who oversaw the move towards the EPA also seem to have been exacerbated by changes in local macro-management, including the institution's founder (see Q2 above), and Teacher 8 explicitly related this to the commercial interest driving the programme:

*Quotation 5.* for people maybe at the level of departmental managers...dealing with the fact that the direction of the school might suddenly *swing* [*arm movements to indicate swing*], 'we're all here to make money' and then *swing*, 'no we're not' and it's very difficult to adjust when business objectives are changing so dramatically. (Teacher 8)

Teacher 8 also commented on political infighting in the institution:

*Quotation 6.* somebody can make a reasonable suggestion that would be really good for the students and not be able to get it done because the person above them *blocks* it and that happens to people at every level and in every *faction* (Teacher 8)

The emphasis on *blocks* may signal my own impact as participant because Teacher 8 would have been aware that my attempts at better integrating the AW and AR courses in my Academic Coordinator role had been resisted. Such an interpretation is supported by the addition of the subsequent clause that opens up the problem 'to people at every level'. The use of the word *faction* suggests that

these local political struggles were well established and identifiable with particular managers belonging to one faction or another. It is unclear how many factions there may have been and only one was identified in my data, with a business teacher and an EAP teacher independently labeling one 'faction' as 'friends of the principal' (PO Notes). I did not probe this issue any further because it was clearly highly sensitive and my focus was on the impact these local political tensions had on the development of the EPA, not on categorizing the different factions themselves. Another business teacher commented on the irony of teaching Business Management theory in such a politically charged local management context and even suggested I focus my case study on management theory because it is so interesting (PO Notes), which also suggests that some of the issues might occur in other departments across the institution. Teacher 8's conclusion that 'politics...is very obstructive' was certainly well supported throughout my interview and participant observation data.

Teacher 17 (an interview participant, see §3.5.3 for explanation of the numbering system applied to participants) explained the impact that managerial conflict had on the development of the EAP programme, expressing a particular concern about continuity:

*Quotation 7.* every year the programme is different so it's like being a new teacher all the time. All teachers feel like new teachers and then you have the new teachers coming in who are completely new and so you can have the old teachers support them but really it's kind of new for them too. (Teacher 17)

There is an implicit suggestion of deprofessionalisation here - a theme expressed by several teachers - in that the work teachers undertake is not seen to progress into the next academic year. Towards the end of the EPA period (2010-2011), local political struggles became overt and directly impacted on the EAP department and programme as exemplified by Teacher 2's remark:

*Quotation 8.* Year One is falling apart at the seams. I don't even know if we've got a manager any more - feel completely detached. (Teacher 2, PO Notes)

This feeling of detachment re-emerges throughout the interview data, particularly in the expressed differences between teacher expectations and the actual professional role (see for example Q11, Q17, Q18, Q25 & Q26), and the perceptions of separateness between the foundation year programme components, which reoccurs in section 4.3.

#### 4.2.2. Technological Resources

The interview participants raised concerns about the technological resources available (see §1.3.5); ‘we are phenomenally under-resourced for a college like this’ (Teacher 8). This seemed to be most conspicuous in the lack of modern technology in the classrooms:

*Quotation 9.* it seems very strange to me that in a university, which seemingly encourages materials development...that the technological capabilities do not meet any modern teaching practice (Teacher 12)

*Quotation 10.* Technological resources - that’s always going to be a problem because - look in the classrooms, we don’t have anything technological in the classrooms basically (Teacher 9)

Teacher 12 also remarked that the relatively ‘backward’ university in which she used to teach had electronic lecterns, projectors and computers in the classroom. Teacher 8 similarly commented that even ‘some high school in some tier four city somewhere’ has such equipment (‘first tier’ refers to Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou in terms of ranking of modernization in China, and ‘tier four’ represents a much less developed city). These views indicate that the EAP classrooms at China Campus may have technologically lagged behind that of other educational institutions in China (see §2.11, p.69). Teacher 10 emphasised this point and related it to efficiency of lesson delivery and student engagement:

*Quotation 11.* I was using interactive whiteboards and that in 1995 and 1996, we didn’t have internet access then because the internet wasn’t about...but there’s no excuse at all for not being able to just click a button in the classroom and quickly jump to a

website and say, 'look this is what you need to do, why don't you have a look at this?' (Teacher 10)

The views expressed are consistent with the observation that communications technology has often been neglected in EAP (Hamp-Lyons, 2011). However, some EAP teachers are nevertheless clearly aware of this deficiency and they would be prepared to use such technology if it were available. This is echoed in the responses to the *EAP Staff Survey 2010*, which was conducted when the intention to replace the EPA was announced, with nine out of fifteen respondents agreeing that 'more computers and projectors would both benefit EAP teachers and have a positive effect on students' grades' (Documentary Data). Although some teachers clearly felt that greater access to technological resources in the classroom would be welcomed, Teacher 9 noted that such advances would also bring fresh problems, such as the need for teacher training:

*Quotation 12.* it would probably be positive [but] I personally am happy just using the whiteboard, but I'm not very technologically minded, I struggle with technology but there are some basic things we could have...We'd need training, more training.  
(Teacher 9)

The mention of training raises the issue of professional development for EAP teachers, and the 'basic things we could have' indicates that the teacher's own basic needs are not met. This comment exemplifies an aspect of a particular local discourse amongst teachers expressing various degrees of dissatisfaction with their professional role in which their expectations are not met (see for example Q7, Q17 & Q29). The implied inefficiency due to limited technological resources (see Q10) was also echoed in concerns raised about time constraints.

#### 4.2.3. Time Constraints

Managers, Coordinators and Course Developers all highlighted the difficulties of putting curriculum plans into practice due to severe time constraints. These time constraints were made manifest in various ways: time to plan/prepare the EPA course, time to implement the EPA course and time to ensure that it was



consistent with other operational programmes such as the students' subject lessons.

Teacher 8 in particular considered time constraints to be the main reason why the four EAP skills were separate from each other and the subject disciplines (this theme of separateness is discussed further below):

*Quotation 13.* There's always been a sense...that there should be more overlap. I mean...if you look in the syllabus it's *recommended* that students do writing based on lectures...that they do in their listening classes...that they do reading for their presentations...and I think why it hasn't happened is *purely* just operational things to do with the time that's required to do something properly and it's never really having been given to us. (Teacher 8)

*Quotation 14.* having the time for the four [coordinators] to get together and also properly liaise with the subjects in advance 'cause you need a good chunk of time to really do that properly. (Teacher 8)

*Quotation 15.* it needs time; it needs collaboration between departments, which has been lacking in the past (Teacher 12)

The key point seems to be that the apportionment of time (see §1.3.4) was insufficient for Coordinators to effectively coordinate the four EAP Skills. Teacher 8 also mentioned issues surrounding implementation of the UKHQ's optional ESAP component, which was included when China Campus was founded but subsequently dropped as the EPA developed:

*Quotation 16.* [ESAP enabled students] to finally engage with a text...a very intensive focus on a text which perhaps the subject departments don't have time to do. But what it meant was that we were using three hours of EAP time to do things which maybe weren't actually impacting our results. (Teacher 8)

Teacher 8's comment on 'impacting our results' is acknowledging exam washback, and is consistent with the observation that the chief impact of teaching towards tests is 'in the content of teaching and *time allocation*' (my italics, Qi, 2005:144). This theme is also revisited in Teacher 17's commentary on the development of the ESAP component (see §4.3.5, Q53). These comments also suggest that plans may have existed to develop the EPA programme in a more cohesive way, but the lack of provision of the necessary time to undertake such work is seen as a major obstacle in effecting those plans.

Teacher 11 reported that departmental managers had expressed the intention to create 'engaging materials' with some explicit integration with subject lessons 'but these efforts [were] severely hampered by time constraints' (Teacher 11). Teacher 12 explicitly links such time constraints with the amount of teaching required:

*Quotation 17.* it seems very strange to me that in a university, which seemingly encourages materials development that teachers are expected to teach 20 contact hours (Teacher 12)

Teachers also reported time constraints around the issue of class time and preparation time. Teacher 1, for example, reported feeling too 'drained' from teaching four writing classes to be able to complete production of planned materials. In practice, this meant falling back on archived materials that may already have been deemed substandard by departmental managers. As Teacher 17 explained, 'there's no time to modify it because you don't have time'. Alternatively, it meant 'having to produce materials at the last minute that aren't necessarily all that great and have errors in them' (Teacher 1).

#### 4.2.4. The student body: Non-*gaokao* Students

Every informant in this study commented on the remarkably low level of English proficiency amongst the students and the 'difference between the expected level and their [actual] level' (Teacher 10).

*Quotation 18.* you know the exam is here and the student level is here [*signalling large gap with hands*] there's a big difference, a big gap there (Teacher 9)

Teacher 9's comment effectively sums up the disconnect between expectations and the actual situation. This was the prevailing view amongst teachers:

*Quotation 19.* [What] I don't get is why, if you failed to get into Chinese university, would you want to study in a second language that you don't speak or hardly speak at all? (Teacher 9)

Teacher 8 reiterated this view and put it firmly in the China context:

*Quotation 20.* it is quite logical that you would probably not consider going to university to study in a foreign language unless you had a fairly good command of it - That's changed! And it's changed, particularly in China, it's changed fast! (Teacher 8)

The change Teacher 8 has observed is consistent with the challenges reported in accommodating increasing numbers of Chinese students in UK universities (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007; see §1.3.2). It is important to highlight that it was not just an issue of English language competence that was reported:

*Quotation 21.* [Students] start Year One at a lower level than they could do or, perhaps, should do...The language skills are weak, tremendously weak and their study skills are probably even weaker (Teacher 10)

In particular, the practice of studying outside of the classroom seemed to be non-existent. Teacher 5, for example, expressed concern over 'how much any students read anything in English outside of what we give them' and, on the topic of independent reading, suggested that 'they possibly could do that themselves, but do they have the sort of motivation and study skills to do that?' These views seem to support, with less certainty, Argent's (2011:10) claim that Chinese students' 'failure to engage with learning opportunities outside the classroom is legendary'. This is signalling a deficit discourse and is clearly contradictory to the highly visible 'self-study' described by Jin and Cortazzi (2006:11) (discussed in §1.3.7). Teacher 8 elaborated on this point:

*Quotation 22.* With a different type of student, from perhaps a different socio-economic background, of a different age, with a

different type of motivation, they could practice it by themselves - they're not going to do that...even though...the amount of self-access material is so much improved, they still don't practise very much by themselves. (Teacher 8)

Such independent learning is a specified UKHQ syllabus requirement and is even assessed through the EAP Portfolio (see §4.3.6). The fact that students did not seem to expect to study outside of the classroom indicates a serious disconnect between EAP teacher expectations of their professional role and the challenges in meeting these expectations with these non-*gaokao* students within the framework of the EPA. Teacher 9 extended this issue beyond the boundaries of EAP provision in China Campus and rather than making any socio-economic class distinctions, linked it to a more general statement about students and study practices in China:

*Quotation 23.* the big problem is - and not just in this school but in China generally - is that the students don't seem to be able to transfer skills, they don't seem to be able to apply knowledge they've learned from one area into another area...maybe it's our fault for not saying it enough, partly it's that but partly it's the students' lack of awareness as well because I found it's not just here but I found that at my last place as well. (Teacher 9)

The reported lack of awareness is consistent with the concerns raised over test washback in their previous educational contexts and that students may frame their expectations of English-medium university study on their *gaokao* preparation and IELTS textbooks (see sections 2.3 and 2.4). These comments summarised many teachers' perspectives that the students' low English proficiency and undeveloped study skills meant they are unable to engage in independent learning and cannot transfer EAP skills to their other subjects. This is a particular discourse circulating amongst teachers in such institutions in China. Teacher 6 implies a problem with the local national learning culture by reporting what students of other nationalities in a different institution were capable of:

*Quotation 24.* we had mixed nationalities so the kids, who were Germans and people like that, were actually fabulous and you

could actually teach about things to do with frequency and things to actually analyse language themselves, so the learners came to a learning environment already *equipped* to be language learners. (Teacher 6)

The implicit assumption is that the non-*gaokao* Chinese students are not 'equipped to be language learners'. A strong deficit discourse (see §1.3.1) is being signalled and this view of non-*gaokao* Chinese students, whose English proficiency and independent study skills are below teacher (and programme) expectations, is clearly well established amongst EAP teachers. The implied primary cause is the students' Chinese educational background: a background of high school failure in their L1, giving rise to poor study skills that exacerbate low level English proficiency. It is, then, unsurprising that there was also a strong local discourse amongst teachers criticising the entry exam level as being too low, as exemplified by the following responses to the *EAP Staff Survey 2010* that was conducted when the intention to replace the EPA was announced:

*Quotation 25.* Student entry level is too low, pre IFY [*International Foundation Year*] course/ Higher level student intake?

*Quotation 26.* The students' entry level is too low. Students below IELTS 4.5 should be rejected (Documentary Evidence)

It is interesting that teachers make general comments about Chinese students rather than comparing the non-*gaokao* students with the *gaokao* students. It is important to foreground this distinction because the latter, unlike their non-*gaokao* counterparts, are all qualified to enter the Chinese partner university and the majority pass all the EAP assessments and continue to study their twin degrees within the two institutions. Although the *gaokao* students are not the focus of this study, it is worth noting that teachers who took *gaokao* classes considered themselves to be lucky and did not report the same difficulties described in this section. Of course further study would be needed in order to make a robust comparison.

## **4.3 Teacher perceptions of the Exam-Practice Approach to teaching academic reading and writing**

### **4.3.1. Programme Structure: Problematising Separateness**

The preceding subsections show that the separation of the subject and EAP components of the Year One programme was, at least partially, caused by issues surrounding constraints of technological resources and time and relations between departmental managers and teachers. Before I present the teachers' views on the impact of this separation, it is important to understand what this notion of separation refers to. It is used by teachers to refer to a range of issues: the operational division of the classes into the four EAP skills; the different topics that were studied in the different skill classes that were unrelated to each other; and the complete isolation of EAP lesson content from other parts of the Year One course. Distinctions between these issues are not always clear in the interview data. Where separateness from subject areas is indicated there is also ambiguity in its precise meaning. ESAP, for example, can refer to the optional component of the UKHQ syllabus, my Academic Writing Coordinator work using subject reading material for writing practice, or a less institutionally-specific meaning (2.3). The reality of classroom practice makes it unlikely that only one EAP skill occurred in its scheduled class; listening and speaking, for example, occurred in reading and writing classes. Furthermore, although the four skills were deliberately 'coordinated' independently of one another, there may have been unintended similarity of lesson content in the materials of the different EAP skills, and some topic content may have been covered in subject classes. The point is that such overlap was accidental and it would be up to the individual teacher to notice this and to focus on such overlap in their lessons.

Teacher 8 suggested that this separation of different EAP skills may have its roots in the nature of many textbooks (see Gillett's 2011 list of EAP titles) and the approach to EAP reflected in them. It may also reflect the inexperience of the EAP teachers during the EPA period as Teacher 8 reported that there were:

*Quotation 27.* only two integrated EAP course-books on the market,  
whereas there are masses and masses of separate ones, like

reading, speaking, listening and writing separated...I don't know if it is a good thing but it seems to be a fairly entrenched convention. (Teacher 8)

The same teacher postulated a possible 'trade-off' between challenging higher level students' skills and ensuring that non-*gaokao* students receive the maximum vocabulary re-encounters (2.5) possible within the time constraints, constructing a tension between 'skills practice' and 'language development'.

*Quotation 28.* maybe at a higher level it is possible to split those four skills and it may even be desirable and useful and I think it is at the lower level where it starts to create more problems (Teacher 8)

The separateness of the EPA skill areas appears to have been a particular cause of frustration for teachers, exemplified by Teacher 6's scathing appraisal:

*Quotation 29.* I don't understand it, I really don't *understand*. I've never worked anywhere, *anywhere* where they try to devise some [expletive] totally separate, separate, separate input and I just don't get why you'd want to do that! (Teacher 6)

The repetition, emphatic intonation and the use of the swear word clearly indicate this participant's emotional frustration with the separate skills' approach. Input, here understood as the reading material, is singled out as a particular cause for concern. One concern surrounding the reading input that constantly introduces new topic content for each EAP class (see Appendix 1) is that it eats into the time provided for skills practice, thus exacerbating the issue of time constraints and making it difficult for teachers to revisit AR input in other EAP skills lessons. Another major concern with separated reading input is its impact on vocabulary learning. Teachers explicitly linked the separation of different classes (distinct EAP skills and subject lessons) to problems with the students' vocabulary acquisition:

*Quotation 30.* one thing that I've noticed is because there are these divided skills - very little connection between any of the different classes from what I can see, and that will impact the vocabulary (Teacher 5)

*Quotation 31.* it's clear *intuitively*, that...if you encounter a lexical set related to one topic and you then, five minutes later, go into another class and encounter another lexical set, you're not going to learn vocabulary because you need to re-encounter it several times and have the opportunity to recycle it. So I think in that sense it can only have had a detrimental effect in terms of vocabulary acquisition. (Teacher 8)

EAP teachers seem to agree that the EPA's separation of the skills slowed non-*gaokao* students' rate of vocabulary acquisition (discussed further below in specific relation to reading) because it reduced the amount of lexical re-encounters in the different EAP skills lessons.

Comments were also made about how the reading materials relate, or should relate to student writing:

*Quotation 32.* Relevant examples should be used to connect what they read to what they are asked to do, in terms of writing, but not absolutely necessary. ESP classes need this direct connection more. (Teacher 17, survey)

*Quotation 33.* This...sounds artificial. We can give models of course but ultimately it's best if students learn from more authentic texts. (Teacher 5, survey)

Teacher 17 is identifying a distinction between the reading for writing undertaken in the EPA and the stronger link needed between the two skills if a subject-specific approach were to be introduced. Teacher 5 seems critical of reading materials created for the purpose of writing instruction (i.e. EPA academic writing), which is viewed as 'artificial'. The teacher does not define 'authentic' (§2.6) but hints at an ESAP approach (discussed below).

Logistical problems surrounding the separation of the EAP skills were also highlighted (PO Notes). One of the reading texts required students to write a summary of the reading passage for their *writing* teacher. However, only half of the writing teachers were also reading teachers - the others were listening teachers with their own separate workload. In practice, this meant that half the teachers



were asked to grade work from an EAP skill teaching group to which they did not belong, which created extra stress within the department regarding skills team responsibilities and the fair distribution of marking loads (PO Notes).

Separateness of the four EAP skills and their language content is an extremely important theme in this context that was clearly perceived to have been a causal factor for many of the other concerns and issues that EAP teachers identified. As such, it reappears in my discussion of other thematic categories and is discussed further at the end of this chapter (4.3.7). For teachers, this separateness also seems to have been reflected in the classroom materials they used.

#### 4.3.2. Materials Design

The uninspiring quality of the EPA materials was noted by several teachers.

*Quotation 34.* A photocopied black and white worksheet...is not visually attractive. There's no real engagement with the students and the type of material we're using in the class (Teacher 10)

Teacher 1 also expressed concerns about 'subliminal stuff such as colour and environment' and whether EAP teachers were sending students indirect messages about EAP via the materials and the interior design of the classroom:

*Quotation 35.* I wonder if our students link the black and white pages we give them with the bare classroom walls, and so conclude unconsciously that EAP has no real content, and that it doesn't adhere to anything, so making its subject relevance entirely moot. (Teacher 1)

Teachers were clearly concerned about the impression that the learning environment and materials design had on the students. Teacher 8 also mentioned the subconscious effect on teachers, linking the lack of technological resources with an implied lack of professionalism by comparing China Campus with another institution:

*Quotation 36.* it's quite subconscious...before coming to [this institution] I worked for the British Council where it's much more of a business, you can't just give students something boring or

they'll just leave and go to another school. And also they had smartboards in every classroom so I got very used to having things looking nice and designed nicely with nice pictures and matching colour schemes and things like that...it just seemed quite natural and quite obvious that things should look professional, look attractive, look engaging. (Teacher 8)

Teachers seem to be engaging in a discourse about the lack of professionalism in this context and the design of the local learning environment is seen to materially reflect and construct such unprofessionalism. These concerns over the visual impression of classroom materials may be of particular significance in this context for two distinct but important reasons. First, the importance attributed to interpreting visual data locally in the subjects is evident in Figure 1.5 and Figure 1.6 (§1.3), and the literature indicates that L1 Chinese learners may be particularly reliant on visuals in their reading cognition and writing processes (§2.7). Second, the dissatisfaction over the attractiveness of the materials described above can be seen as symbolic of discourse amongst teachers expressing dissatisfaction with their professional role; a theme that is discussed further below (§4.3.7). It is the first aspect to which I turn now, and Teacher 8 spoke at length on the visual needs of the L1 Chinese learner:

*Quotation 37.* Chinese students are very visual. And I think that compared to - for students of other nationalities a lot of instructions could be given verbally - the materials that I made...pretty much everything is on the worksheet...and I think that helps with classroom instruction because you're not constantly trying to explain what to do or what's going on; they can see it and can do it. (Teacher 8)

These L1 Chinese students are viewed as having significantly stronger visual interpretation skills than listening skills when compared to other nationalities. Teachers reported that students *seeing* language or concepts can enable them to perform. This was emphasised with reference to the use of diagrams to support teaching:

*Quotation 38.* If I'm explaining the learning cycle for the portfolio...you get feedback, you reflect, you improve - anything like that, I quite often use flow charts or diagrams, just simple ones on the board and they definitely - their eyes'll pop out and they'll start writing it down - so I do think they find seeing things like that easier. (Teacher 8)

Teacher 2 agreed that diagrams help students to understand concepts, for example when discussing the teaching of conventional rhetorical structures found in academic writing:

*Quotation 39.* Well certainly diagrams - a diagram lesson where students put the function of the diagram into a paragraph and...I think the visual side helps a lot. Certainly for teaching diagrams are very, very helpful. (Teacher 2)

Teacher 6 described an 'aha! moment' experienced by a student and emphasised the important role that a diagrammatic stimulus played:

*Quotation 40.* I remember one day one of the students leapt up and with a board-pen drew this magnetic fields [diagram], one of the visuals, and said, 'Look!' and he said that, that, that, 'rays come in here' and he actually, through a diagram that he drew, he explained an entire process...and for him it was a breakthrough and I said to him, 'If you can write that then you've got your essay.' (Teacher 6)

It is clear that some teachers view the use of non-lexical visual items as a viable means of engaging and enabling the non-*gaokao* students and that this operates across the skills, moving from reading skills to productive speaking and writing. Teacher 6's 'aha! moment' involves a discipline-specific diagram (discussed further in §4.3.5), and discipline-specificity is also indicated by Teachers 5 and 10 in relation to reading materials design:

*Quotation 41.* why wouldn't engineers find reading about an engineering topic interesting? Why would a business student find reading about the derivation of Roman names more

interesting than something about the financial crisis or something like that? We can choose the materials that meet the students' interests, and that's not a ground-breaking approach in education. (Teacher 10)

*Quotation 42.* if [classroom texts] couldn't be more related to the topics the students'll study, like business texts, economics texts that we could recycle from their subject courses...that seems better to me than sort of randomly finding topics (Teacher 5)

Both Teachers 5 and 10 are clearly leaning towards discipline-specificity in students' EAP reading material as a means of both engaging students' interests and solving the issue of random topic content in reading materials (see Appendix 1). The issue of random reading material is discussed in the next section alongside a related issue implied by Teacher 5's use of the word *recycle* - vocabulary development.

#### 4.3.3. The Development of Vocabulary and Reading

Interviewer: How important is vocabulary work in Year One EAP?

Teacher 6: Number one...

All participants commented on the issue of students' vocabulary acquisition and it is clearly a major concern, if not *the* major concern in the local EAP context and yet 'the idea of a vocabulary syllabus and a systematic exploration of structure was always missing' (Teacher 10). Teacher views about vocabulary teaching and learning were closely related to views about the reading texts. Two reading texts in particular appeared to be emblematic of the kinds of issues teachers perceived surrounding reading and vocabulary learning in the local context. These texts were *Zulu Beads* and *The Family Tree of Germanicus*, the former a comprehension reading test introducing the cultural significance of bead work in the Zulu context; the latter being a logical matching exercise where students had to complete a diagrammatic family tree based on the information in the reading text (see §4.3.2 for discussion on the perceived benefits of diagrams in teaching materials). Whilst these texts might be considered the most extreme examples in terms of the unclear purpose of reading topic content, they are not atypical of the materials

used (Appendix 1). Teacher 9 directly poses the question that represents the view of most teachers:

*Quotation 43.* I remember one year we had to do the Zulu Bead work and, yeah, why are we teaching the kids this?! (Teacher 9)

Teacher 5 states that 'reading is extremely important' and joins Teacher 10 in expressing concerns about the impact of random topic content on students' vocabulary acquisition and transferability of skills. Here *random* is understood to refer to the unrelated topics (i.e. separateness) and non-sequential nature of the content of AR texts (Appendix 1) that led to a general lack of systematic pedagogical progression on the course.

*Quotation 44.* random topics with no targets, in what vocabulary - and no recycling. And my impression is the teachers are disjointed so how can [the students] cope in the subjects when they're supposed to use it? (Teacher 5)

*Quotation 45.* A series of randomly chosen texts and discrete lessons doesn't provide a step by step development cycle for kids to move from one range of vocabulary knowledge - by say 2000 words - we don't help them move to 3000 words (Teacher 10)

These views are consistent with the issues surrounding the separateness of the skills and the impact this has on students' vocabulary acquisition (see Q29 & Q30 in section 4.3.1). Teacher 6 provides specific examples of the impact of this separateness and randomness in the form of 'random lists of unidentifiable, decontextualised lexical items' in student portfolios (see §4.3.6.1), with some lists including dinosaur names and *the abominable snowman* (PO Notes). Concerns over the relevance of vocabulary acquisition were also noted by Teacher 7 who claimed that it is a waste of time for students to learn vocabulary for clothes or food when they could be focusing on lexis related to economics and engineering (PO Notes). This is consistent with the arguments in favour of ESAP that derive from research into academic vocabulary (see §2.9). Indeed, as noted in §4.3.2,

Teachers 5 and 10 imply discipline-specificity would provide a solution to the problem of random readings (Q40 & Q41).

However, the seemingly logical preference for subject-related readings over apparently random topics is not as simple as it may first seem. As noted above, Teacher 8 posited a potential benefit of the separation of the EAP skills for higher level students (Q27). Mentioning the concepts of 'Krashen and roughly tuned input', this teacher also related the random reading topics to this potential 'trade-off' between the needs of higher-level and lower-level students:

*Quotation 46.* to really develop reading...you really need to read...a lot of stuff extensively not intensively. And by having a lot of different topics I think we are actually providing that but at the same time we are, especially with students at this level, taking away the opportunity for recycling vocabulary. (Teacher 8)

There seems to be an identified tension between the extensive reading that is necessary for students to improve their English proficiency, and the subject-focused reading needed to ensure non-*gaokao* students encounter the specific vocabulary required for them to pursue their subject studies. This tension is identified in the literature (e.g. Grabe & Stoller, 2002, 2011; discussed in §2.7 and 2.8), reflects issues with test washback (§2.3), relates to the arguments surrounding ESAP (§2.6) and resurfaces in other sections of this chapter below. By prioritising the practice of reading strategies for answering exam questions over systematically trying to improve the students' English proficiency, the EPA undermines the potential benefit students could derive from the reading course, as Teacher 10 explains:

*Quotation 47.* [It] tends to make [EAP] an unfulfilling experience for a lot of the students and I think that is the biggest impact. Doing continual exam practice does tune the kids into techniques for guessing answers, and sure enough, if you read something twice a week then slowly over time you'll get more familiar with these words...a little bit of a positive effect - just the fact that they see things so often but less of a positive effect when you consider the motivation side of things. (Teacher 10)

This teacher links the EPA to low student motivation and clearly considers the washback from the exam to have reduced the effectiveness of the EPA reading class for language teaching. The use of 'slowly' implies that it is an inefficient method for students' vocabulary acquisition. Again, the lack of systematic selection of reading texts (i.e. randomness) is seen as problematic:

*Quotation 48.* if you just take discrete texts from a variety of books, put them all together in a collection, there's no systematic approach to language development. (Teacher 10)

For this reason, this teacher was a strong advocate for building the course around one course book, and was not alone in adopting a strong pro-course book stance (see section 4.3.4).

#### **4.3.3.1. Academic Word List (AWL)**

Towards the end of the EPA period, efforts were being made to introduce Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL). Teacher 5 indicated awareness that the AWL has been criticised in the literature (see section 2.9 for discussion) with the comment 'the underlying thing is we're *assuming* the AWL is a good thing.' Teacher 6 acknowledged this but went on to argue that use of the AWL would be practical in the China Campus context:

*Quotation 49.* Whether or not it's the best system, it's a widely used system...because of the fact that you can copy and paste any text, *any* text into the highlighter, and in a *second* you have a frequency-based lexical resource *identified*. Learners *aren't* capable of deciding for themselves what lexical items they meet frequently so therefore if there's a *tool* that identifies...the most frequent words. (Teacher 6)

The AWL, then, seems to have been regarded as an achievable remedy to the lack of a systematic vocabulary focus in the AR materials that teachers could access to supplement their lessons. However, not all teachers agreed with the introduction of the AWL and there was greater support for the introduction of a course book (i.e. a commercially available textbook upon which the EAP programme could be based).

#### 4.3.4. The use of Course Book/Textbook

Seven interviewees commented on course books or textbooks, making no distinction between the two. In all cases, the implication was that the book would replace the separate materials in the separate skills classes, with those existing materials relegated to supplementary resources to be used at the discretion of the individual teacher.

Prior to the EPA, there was 'a Reading course book' (Teacher 10) and the formation of the EPA reading programme involved the 'straight switch over from that book to IELTS practice tests, which are no more relevant to the students' needs' (Teacher 10). Towards the end of the EPA period (see Table 1.2), there was an impression that most teachers were broadly in favour of a return to a course book, with eleven out of fifteen respondents to the *EAP Staff Survey 2010* (circulated throughout the department and discussed at a departmental meeting) indicating that student books would 'help greatly' (Documentary Data). However, concern was also documented that 'teachers may become overly dependent on 'the book' and be less responsive to students' true needs' (Documentary Data), which is consistent with Harwood's (2014:12; see §1.3.1) observations. Teacher 10 strongly recommended moving back to a course book because:

*Quotation 50.* if you look in a course book there's the idea of a vocabulary syllabus and the constant recycling of vocabulary throughout the texts. (Teacher 10)

The need for a systematic approach to vocabulary building was Teacher 10's main reason for advocating a course book. However, Teacher 7 suggested that a systematic approach to vocabulary teaching is insufficient as the sole criterion on which to select a textbook, and expressed the practical concern that 'there isn't one that fits' the syllabus requirements. This is consistent with the identification of 'a lack of fit between how academic writers write and what the textbooks teach about writing' (Harwood, 2005:150). Teacher 12 took this argument further, 'I don't really agree with using a textbook,' and constructed an argument against the concept of a textbook:



*Quotation 51.* it doesn't fit all the syllabus requirements... Textbooks are a good fit for the general language learner, that's their purpose, but to develop a course, you need analysis on your students, on the institution, on UKHQ requirements and then specifically design your curriculum and syllabus according to that rather than trying to make a book fit and this fit and vice versa. (Teacher 12)

The UKHQ syllabus requirements referred to are likely to be those based on specific local assessment such as the coursework or optional ESAP component (see section 1.3.5) which is discussed further in section 4.3.5. Teacher 12's opposition to the textbook is consistent with Harwood's (2005) defined 'anti-textbook position' that commercially available 'textbooks cannot cater for the varied [and specific] needs in classrooms around the world' (p.149). It also echoes the comments by Teachers 5 and 10 (see Q40 and Q41) on the EPA reading material; that it could be more directly related to the various factors influencing a locally contextualised needs analysis. It is interesting to note that Teacher 10 and Teacher 12 both argue for materials that are more relevant to the target situation needs, yet one is strongly pro-course book and the other challenges whether any textbook could meet those needs. Teacher 12 is consciously employing ESAP discourses and is, in fact, an advocate for an ESAP approach.

#### 4.3.5. English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)

The discussion above cites teachers drawing on ESAP discourses as a potential solution to the issues of separateness and apparent randomness; to move towards discipline-specific readings with appropriate visuals; and to argue both for and against an EAP textbook. 'I think ESAP has vast potential to solve the problems - it needs time; it needs collaboration between departments' (Teacher 12).

The pre-EPA programme featured an ESAP component (Table 1.2) that gave Teacher 8 'an *impression...that...pretty much the only* aspect of their subjects that the students fully understood was the part that was covered in EAP class.' However, as noted under *Time Constraints* (4.2.3), this was abolished because EAP lesson time was taken up by work that was not assessed by the EAP

department. This led to the paradoxical situation where what ‘was good for the students, wasn’t really that good for EAP’ (Teacher 8).

A new ESAP approach was piloted towards the end of the EPA period (Table 1.2). Participants were therefore able to comment directly on their experiences teaching ESAP.

Whilst discipline-related readings meant that Business students ‘were kind of inspired...to find out more things [it was] not so noticeable as with engineers - engineers it was *really, really* noticeable’ (Teacher 6). One student is described as experiencing a ‘breakthrough’ or an ‘aha!’ moment’ (see Q39) and making a transition from being ‘bored’, ‘comatose’ or ‘a waste of space’ to ‘bright, active and engaged as a learner’ (Teacher 6). This is clearly consistent with Teacher 10’s comments about students’ motivation and interest (Q41 & Q75) and suggests that the deficit model (see §1.3.1 & 1.3.2) can be challenged. Teacher 6 suggested that EPA assessments could usefully be remodelled as a kind of ESAP project, ‘to actually develop a portfolio around something that involves *research, a presentation, outcomes.*’ Teacher 5 agreed ‘that would be a lot more meaningful than what they do now’ (a discussion that is revisited in section 4.3.6). Such integration would also be consistent with the UKHQ’s position (released during the transition period from EPA to post-EPA):

*Quotation 52.* Despite the way the syllabus...seems to teach skills discretely, the emphasis should be on integrated skills. (UKHQ Guidelines)

However, Teacher 17 remarked that assessment issues (section 4.3.6) and time constraints (section 4.2.3) would cause difficulties for an introduction of ESAP:

*Quotation 53.* We don’t have time to introduce ESAP...UKHQ’s assessment is still the same so of course you’re going to teach to the test because that’s the assessment but if the assessment changes to reflect the new module, I mean, adapt the assessment! (Teacher 17)

This teacher is clearly identifying test washback (section 2.3) as an obstacle to the development of an ESAP programme.

Teacher 11 reported that an introduction of ESAP should not be a one way process. 'Subject teachers can't say, 'it's your job in EAP to improve their English', it has to be integrated.' This, Teacher 11 argued, would raise the transferability of EAP skills because 'It shows students how to use their skills in their subjects.' Teacher 6 made a similar point, that 'the subject teachers as *well* have things to learn about what the learners can *do*' and Teacher 8, responding to the issues of departmental responsibilities highlighted by ESAP provision, challenged the distinct division between EAP teacher and subject teacher:

*Quotation 54.* Is it really necessary that all those so called EAP hours are really delivered by EAP teachers? Rather than having 15 hours of EAP, maybe the subject teachers should be better trained to be teaching in a way in which students will be developing the same skills. (Teacher 8)

This comment blurs the boundary between EAP and subject teachers and even raises doubt over the necessity of having a distinct EAP programme. Teacher 12 observed that EAP teachers could also be experts in the subject: 'a lot of teachers who I know have MBAs and...are in the TESOL industry.' This relates to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) (see Buzzi, Grimes & Rolls, 2012 for discussion) that acknowledge subject specificity in disciplinary writing but debate who is responsible, or who should be responsible for teaching this in the university context. This debate had been the subject of various formal and informal meetings at China Campus and featured in Griffiths' (2010) recommendations (see §2.6). Teacher 12, echoing Spack's (1988) argument that it is unreasonable to expect English teachers to acquire sufficient knowledge of other academic disciplines (see section 2.7), acknowledges some 'EAP teachers may not understand Economics content, which puts them off teaching it.' The same is also true of any assumption that a Business teacher can teach EAP:

*Quotation 55.* it is a big mistake - and I think it happens a lot - to assume that just because you can teach Business that you have the skills to teach an EAP course. (Teacher 12)

It seems that *integration* across the whole Year One course would be valued in this context, but that there was no agreement (theoretical or logistical) as to how this might be implemented.

#### 4.3.6. Assessment

The reading and writing assessment consisted of an AR exam, AW exam, two AW coursework assignments and an academic portfolio (see §1.3.4). Several participants raised issues surrounding EAP assessment and its washback (see §2.3 & 2.4) effect on the development of the EPA. This is a relatively long section that is divided into sub-sections according to the particular aspects of assessment or its impact being discussed.

##### 4.3.6.1. *Portfolio*

The portfolio in particular, representing 20% of the students' Year One EAP grade, seemed to be symbolic of the perceived gap between the purpose of the programme (in terms of the academic purpose of EAP and the stated aims of the UKHQ syllabus) and practice. Teachers described it as a '*deluge* of papers' (Teacher 6) that has 'become, well monstrous really' (Teacher 8), making it a major cause of confusion and demotivation for students that impacted on the already tight time constraints of the EAP class schedule.

The main issue reported is that highly scaffolded Independent Learning Activities give students a very misleading model of independent learning and Teacher 2 criticised the concept of the 'set Independent Learning Activity [as] an oxymoron'. The labelling of highly prescribed work as 'independent' appears to have been a major site of confusion and 'having compulsory independent learning activities that are random is a bit odd' (Teacher 6). The consequence of this on the students' learning was highlighted by Teacher 5:

*Quotation 56.* it just becomes an exercise in just stuffing as many pieces of paper as possible in the portfolio as they can and they're not really recognising, in my opinion, the skills they're supposed to be getting out of it. (Teacher 5)

Teacher 6 agrees and clearly sees the portfolio, as practised under the EPA, as reinforcement of learner confusion and dependency:

*Quotation 57.* how it ends up being practised is it's just a pile of pieces of paper in it and the tragedy is that if you do have a big file with lots of pieces of paper in it then you get a good mark for it so it continues this malpractice of what students think is independent learning. (Teacher 6)

This problematisation of the portfolio - its unintended impact on the teaching of reading, writing and vocabulary learning - was the most conspicuous criticism of the EPA assessments. The criticisms levelled at the portfolio practice in the two quotations above (Q56 and Q57) indicate that it was operating in direct opposition to the stated syllabus aim of fostering independent learning, and failing to meet the central tenets of the intended 'skills-centred approach'. It was therefore failing to meet its own objectives - to encourage genuine independent learning - and may even, paradoxically, have reinforced learner dependency by misleading students' conception of what independent learning is; something Teacher 6 clearly perceives as unprofessional through the use of the word *malpractice*. Teacher 8 provided a detailed analysis of the problems with assessing the portfolio; problems which are also relevant to other forms of EAP assessment:

*Quotation 58.* all of this work - the [Independent Learning Activities], the templates, the checklists - it's all an attempt to systematise it so we can actually measure it because it is assessed and we have to measure it...but...those things are just too hard to measure...It's because it counts as such a large part of their grade, we have to be absolutely certain that whatever work the student has done, it is completely clear to others what they've done. (Teacher 8)

This again highlights the impact of test washback (§2.3) and the key issues seem to be the need to *measure* (the word being repeated five times in this section of Teacher 8's original interview in response to my question, 'the portfolio - do you have any views on that?') and the need to know that it is the student who did the work. Both of these factors can prove problematic when assessing student writing

generally and this is a recognized problem associated with Process Writing Discourse (Ivanič, 2004:231-232). Teacher 1 expressed concern that his students may be penalized for trying to be creative (discussed further with regards to academic writing in section 4.3.6.3 below) and Teacher 12 was concerned 'that plagiarism and other collusion issues are treated too leniently...lead[ing] to a situation whereby [coursework] assessments are not an overall good or accurate measure of student's ability' (Survey).

#### **4.3.6.2. EAP Exams**

Several teachers also expressed concern over the EAP exams and Teacher 12 had a very clear position in this respect, stating that 'the testing methods are antiquated in my view.' This teacher elaborated on the problem with the EAP exams and directly related it to the Chinese educational context which is placed in opposition to 'a Western view of education':

*Quotation 59.* I believe that [China Campus] is trying to put forward a Western view of education. However, we're still expected to 'teach to test,' which just reinforces what the Chinese students have learned throughout their school career, in their high schools in particular, and so it seems implementation doesn't match the mission (Teacher 12)

The 'mission' referred to here is the intended aim of the EAP syllabus to move students away from teacher-led exam-focused learning to prepare them for their disciplinary studies. So, just as the portfolio assessment seems to contradict its own aims, Teacher 12's comments suggest that the EAP exams contradict the aims of the course. This appears to be a major concern of teachers: the exams, and hence the approach derived from them (i.e. washback), do not match the stated aims of the syllabus. This, it seems from this teacher's perspective, may be a greater problem in China because of the traditional cultural focus on exams:

*Quotation 60.* the problem, I think is that we're trying to say that you shouldn't learn like you did in Chinese high school and yet we're teaching the same - testing using the same methods. A lot of the tests are multiple choice...we're encouraging again the Chinese

exam is all, and certainty avoidance society methods of learning, which is to cram information just prior to a test rather than actually learn how to use that information in an everyday setting. (Teacher 12)

This teacher specifically cited multiple-choice as a manifestation of washback from Chinese high school teaching and testing, which is clearly consistent with Qi's (2005) observation (section 2.3). Teacher 12 also seems to echo Hofstede's (1986) model of cultural variability and the dimension of uncertainty avoidance - the extent to which a culture is comfortable with accommodating uncertainty and ambiguity. The implication seems to be that the Chinese students feel more comfortable in a highly structured situation, with strict codes of behaviour and belief in an absolute truth (Hofstede, 1986). This may offer some further explanation for the difficulty encountered in implementing the portfolio assessment in practice (§4.3.6.1), and it also implies that the EAP exams and the resultant washback reinforces the stereotype of the Chinese learner as discussed in section 1.3.1.

It is not only the unintended reinforcement of the stereotypical exam-focused Chinese learning style that is criticised, but the EAP exams are also problematised in relation to their academic purpose:

*Quotation 61.* The writing section allows the students to use personal experience to support ideas, which is not the case for academic writing at colleges and universities most of the time. (Teacher 17, survey)

*Quotation 62.* when do you have to write an essay without the use of sources, just off the top of your head? That's very unnatural in writing. (Teacher 9)

This echoes the concerns in the literature (e.g. Mayor 2006, Green 2005 and Moore & Morton 2005, see 2.3) that the IELTS test is not an appropriate model of academic writing and should not be seen as such. Teacher 9, who reported having recently researched this area whilst pursuing a Masters degree, commented on

this at length and explicitly distinguished between writing for IELTS and writing for university:

*Quotation 63.* we had an exam for IELTS where we were writing a timed essay and it was supposed to be preparing students for writing at university but actually when do you have to write passages like that at university? Maybe in an exam...but you wouldn't be expected to write an essay off the top of your head without prior knowledge. (Teacher 9)

This teacher concluded that 'It's not an EAP exam' and was critical of a non-academic exam, 'I don't see the point of it; I really don't see the point of it!' The EAP academic writing exam, like the IELTS task 2 writing test upon which it is based, is seen as having no clear academic purpose. Teacher 5 also emphasised that 'It doesn't test a broad enough or relevant enough range of skills (e.g. note-making, summarizing)' (survey). These criticisms are similar to those levelled at the five-paragraph essay (see for example Brannon et al, 2008:16) and indicate that it is inadequate as a model of academic writing, which is consistent with the notion of genre as discussed in section 2.5.

However, this appears to be an area of disagreement between EAP teachers and only half of the interviewees agreed with Teacher 9 that an IELTS-style test is not suitable for EAP assessment (survey). Coordinators, course developers and managers would likely have been aware of a wider debate about the role of IELTS as a gatekeeping test for university entrance as it frequently appeared in their BALEAP (formerly *The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes*) forum email digest during the latter part of the EPA period (2010). This problematisation of the local EAP exams therefore contributes to a wider discourse that questions the appropriateness of IELTS-style tests to establish readiness to pursue an academic career in English (discussed further in Chapter 6).

#### **4.3.6.3. Writing Conventions and Conflict**

Further disagreement between teachers is revealed with respect to academic writing that reflects wider concerns within the EAP profession and draws on fundamental questions concerning the relationship between communicative



competence, language teaching and assessment. Teachers 1 and 2 clearly disagree over the flexibility of the conventions of academic writing and the purpose of EAP and extracts from their arguments constitute the primary data presented in this section.

In a quote reminiscent of Askehave and Swales' (2001:199) 'rules of the game', Teacher 2 employs a sport metaphor to illustrate genre-specific limitations on individual creativity:

*Quotation 64.* if you're playing tennis or if you're playing basketball, you obviously need to be taught the rules of the game so you could then get better at this activity. And I think the same concept applies to academic writing and essay writing and if you follow the rules of academic writing, you can at least get yourself into the game, so to speak, and then you can improve your game within this framework... you can get a basketball player who still plays by the rules but then does fantastic layoffs, dunk shots - there's lots of creative possibilities. (Teacher 2)

This teacher states that EAP teachers should not be encouraging students to deviate from the conventions upon which the assessments are based, and that passing EAP gate-keeping exams - 'to get them through the programme' (Teacher 2) - is seen as the goal of EAP. This is highly consistent with administrative managerial discourses that emphasise exam results (see §1.3.3 & 1.3.7, and reflected in teacher perceptions of local management 4.2.1) and thus the central tenet of the EPA. Teacher 1, however, is concerned that teaching to such limitations creates artificiality in student writing (observations regarding 'signal phrases' and the use of personal pronouns are also raised in chapter 5):

*Quotation 65.* this semester I have been giving students that kind of scaffolding - how to structure a body paragraph - and sometimes it works, but sometimes it just leads to the artificial use of signal phrases so they use the phrase 'to give an example' and don't actually provide an example. (Teacher 1)

*Quotation 66.* So we do this with things like ‘You can’t use the word ‘I’ but then you look at a million academic books and they’re all full of that kind of language. (Teacher 1)

In quote Q65, Teacher 1 is implying the potential for confusion due to the difference between taught academic writing and the kinds of reading students might encounter. This teacher also directly disagrees with Teacher 2 (Q63) by challenging the notion that rules have been established to cover all possible written responses to tasks:

*Quotation 67.* I’m not sure we can necessarily sit down and write the rules for what would be appropriate. It’s just a kind of free-floating thing about ‘you can’t use a personal pronoun’ or ‘paraphrase here or paraphrase there and stick it all together and that’s your essay!’ (Teacher 1)

*Quotation 68.* It’s just to basically get a score, just to pass a test and get a mark. They’re just standardised tests so if it doesn’t fit the grid that’s been drawn up [implying marking criteria] then somehow it’s wrong but it’s just that they haven’t thought of all the original kinds of response that might be possible. (Teacher 1)

These views are implicitly critical of the Exam-Practice Approach and this teacher does not appear to be comfortable with the practice of enforcing local conventions through the grading of student papers:

*Quotation 69.* I’m all for students’ voice, originality...a couple of students who did have different ways to do the introduction...wanted to start off with more colourful comments, more arresting for the reader, and I had to say to them, ‘actually, this might bring you down in marks’ (Teacher 1)

Teacher 1 takes this criticism further by expressing concern that the focus on passing a test means that the purpose of academic endeavour may be lost:

*Quotation 70.* the end goal of it is about the creation of knowledge and actually about doing research and that kind of thing, and

most of our students - unless they know that is the end, that's the track it's on, then they probably don't understand why they're doing it at all. (Teacher 1)

Rather than focussing on 'rules', this teacher seems to employ a Bakhtinian view of language as intertextualised threads of different discourses (§2.5) drawn together in the construction of a new text, in order to support an argument in favour of student voice:

*Quotation 71.* To use quotation and paraphrasing and to use them creatively to try to combine them so they're making something that is different that's their own words but they've also integrated material that they're quoting - it'd be ventriloquied. (Teacher 1)

This view suggests that students are (or should be) involved in negotiation over the tension between competency and expert in the concept of genre (see §2.5). Teacher 1 makes this explicit, concluding that:

*Quotation 72.* we tell them, 'no, there's a different way of...[writing] it in English'; maybe we shouldn't be doing that, maybe we should be trying to...create something different, you know some sort of hybrid (Teacher 1)

The use of the word 'hybrid' in relation to the intertextual combination of different texts in the creation of a new local text is consistent with Street's (2003b:80) usage and is discussed further in relation to rhetorical functions in reading materials presented in section 5.3. Teacher 1's position is also compatible with a possible 'modification response' (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5), whereby the practices of the Western institution can be re-evaluated through interaction with and recognition of the cultural and L1 resources that students bring to their studies. Teacher 2 agrees with the teaching of paraphrasing and quotation skills, which was a UKHQ syllabus requirement, but disagrees with Teacher 1 in respect of aiming to construct students' voice. Adopting a strong 'intervention response' perspective (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5; see §1.3.2), Teacher 2 argues that student opinion is not valued and that their goal is to simply demonstrate competence:

*Quotation 73.* I know this sounds very cynical, but...no! You don't want their opinion...this sounds really bad but - I said to my students, 'look you're at college now, we don't care about your opinion. Your job is to get source material and to use their opinion to form a coherent essay'... Again this is very cynical, but right up to even PhD level, giving your own opinion is getting on to shaky ground. (Teacher 2)

The repetition of the word 'cynical' and the comment 'this sounds really bad' suggest that this teacher may not be convinced of the pedagogical ethics embedded within this claim. Furthermore, Teacher 2 ends with a caveat - the argument for students not to express their own voice is ironically less relevant for the IELTS-style EAP exam 'where they are sort of drawing on their own experiences' (Teacher 2). This echoes Teacher 9's claim that the AW exam is not academic (see comment after Q62) and problematizes the teaching of 'rules for academic style' (Appendix 16) in preparation for tests where students are expected to write from personal experience. The conflicting aims of the programme giving rise to the debate exemplified by the commentary of Teachers 1 and 2 (Q64 - Q71) - to learn academic English or to pass gate-keeping tests - are consistent with the doubts EAP teachers have raised about the purpose of the EPA and their own professional role (discussed further in §4.3.7).

Another concern raised by Teacher 2 in relation to writing was the appropriateness of students embedding visuals in their written assignments. In an informal discussion, Teacher 2 argued that visuals have no place in a traditional essay (PO Notes). Precisely what was understood by 'traditional essay' was not defined but the preoccupation with this particularly labelled genre is consistent with Andrews' (2003) claim that the essay remains 'the default genre of assessment in...further and higher education' (p.126). However, the suggestion that essays should not include non-lexical visual elements seems to be at odds with the reality of undergraduate writing in Economics and Engineering in particular (see §4.4 & 5.2.3) and therefore, such an essay is unlikely to be conceptually based in an ESAP approach (§2.6 & 4.3.5). When asked about this in the interview, Teacher 2 reported to be less certain about the place of visuals in academic texts:

*Quotation 74.* As for having diagrams in essays themselves, I think that has got to be dependent on the task, hasn't it? If it's a report, that's allowed diagrams. If it's a discursive essay then I'd still say perhaps not, but I don't know what the convention is...If you're reading a journal or something then you'll certainly have an argument made with diagrams added but I think that depends on the subject teacher. Perhaps you could ask them and say, 'is a diagram appropriate in this particular essay?' (Teacher 2)

There seems to be an element of conflict with the same teacher's relative certainty about identifying and teaching EAP rules (Q64) but the views expressed in Q72 are clearly consistent with the arguments in favour of ESAP (section 4.3.5) and collaboration with faculty (discussed in 4.4). Perhaps the teachers' comments signal a wider change in EAP discourse; moving away from teaching the decontextualized conventions of the Study Skills model (Lea & Street, 2006; see §2.2) to consideration of the 'language variation across disciplines, genres, modes, and languages which is increasingly informing classroom materials and practice' (Hyland, 2009:6).

#### **4.3.6.4. Perceived Solutions**

Possible solutions to the problems with the EAP exams were proposed. Teacher 9 suggested that it might be better to assess writing through 'coursework...like a portfolio.' This echoes Teacher 6's suggestion of an ESAP portfolio (see *ESAP*) and seems to be a conceptual reworking of the existing portfolio assessment with the misleading and self-contradictory elements removed. This is also consistent with Hyland's (2007:162) proposal for a portfolio assessment that could enable students 'to compare different genres and writing experiences and consider the criteria used for judging it.' Teacher 12 recommends a move towards continuous assessment, 'to get away from the tests...to *test* continually throughout a semester'. However, despite problematizing the exams, Teacher 12 pointed to issues of academic dishonesty, collusion and plagiarism in coursework assignments (see Q58 in §4.3.6.1) and felt, therefore, that 'some tests need to

remain so that students are not awarded grades on continuous assessments which they do not deserve’.

#### 4.3.7. Separateness, Randomness and Purposelessness

The interconnected themes of separateness, randomness and purposelessness weave throughout the teachers’ perceptions of the EPA programme with variations in meaning. This short subsection aims to tease out some of the meanings implied by teachers’ use of these words.

*Separateness* is clearly used to describe the unrelated AW, AR and subject lessons and their associated learning materials. It indicates the teaching of English separate to its intended purpose. It is also implied in the reported disassociation or detachment that teachers’ feel surrounding their professional role, which is closely related to the disconnect between expectations and the actual unclear purpose of the EPA.

*Randomness* is used by teachers to refer to the thematically unrelated content of the different AW and AR classes and their apparent lack of systematic pedagogical progression. Teacher 5 was concerned with vocabulary and transferability of EAP skills to subject areas (Q42 & Q44) and this seems to have been demonstratively problematic in the Portfolio assessment (§4.3.6.1). Teachers 5, 6, 10 and 12 imply that an ESAP approach (§4.3.5) would help solve issues associated with randomness. Teacher 11 suggested that since the students ‘don’t want to do EAP anyway because they’re here to do Business or Engineering,’ ESAP might also have a motivational benefit. Teacher 10, who described the students as ‘demoralised’, was also concerned about the impact of randomness on student motivation:

*Quotation 75.* I don’t know anyone in the world who says, ‘it’s better to do something random than...[something in] the students’ interests.’ We seem to...have gone down that route (Teacher 10)

*Separateness* and *randomness* were also problematized in relation to purpose - the ‘P’ of EAP - or the lack thereof:

*Quotation 76.* Generally speaking, people have a purpose in reading and we don’t encourage that - having these isolated skills and

random texts that nothing ever happens to. They're not even required to comment on the text that they read, whether they thought the actual contents was interesting or useful or who quite liked it, which is what you'd normally do with input in some way. (Teacher 6)

Teacher 6's claims regarding the purposelessness of EPA reading materials is investigated further in chapter 5.

In addition to the issues identified in the curriculum and materials, *purposelessness* and *separateness* also seem to reflect the feelings of EAP teachers about their role. Teacher 2's cynicism (Q73) seems to stem from his disillusionment with the university system, a disillusionment that is explicitly aggravated by commercialism (Q3) and 'detachment' from the local management (Q8). Teacher 6's scathing appraisal of the separateness of the EPA programme (Q29) and the resultant lack of purpose (Q76) also point to the lack of professional purpose in the EAP teacher role. The separateness and randomness teachers identified in the EPA seem to reflect a more fundamental professional experience of purposelessness. This is a theme I return to in chapter 6.

#### **4.4 Faculty Perspectives on the Exam-Practice Approach**

This short section presents data from documentary and participant observation sources in order to provide further contextual details of China Campus and help situate the perspectives of EAP teachers within the wider institutional context. This data is also drawn on in the analysis of rhetorical functions and the comparison of the language taught in academic writing with that encountered in the academic reading material (section 5.3).

In discussions about the reintroduction of ESAP (2010-2011 Transition Period; see Table 1.2), both BIZ and ENG faculty saw the addition of visual data to be the most important way in which the EAP programme could be improved (PO Notes). The head of Engineering emphasised the importance of visuals through his extensive (almost exclusive) use of diagrams, pictures and photographs in his PowerPoint slides (Figure 1.5), and the Head of Department for the Year One Physics course sent the EAP department a document explicitly advising the use of Pople's (2001) *Advanced Physics through diagrams*:

the students' textbook, *Advanced Physics through diagrams*...Any EAP material derived from this book will be directly relevant to the Physics course. Thus it is highly recommended to use this text if possible. (Documentary Data)

This same document contained a detailed list of internally accessible teaching materials and recommendations for teaching vocabulary and 'comprehension of problem' exercises, none of which was used in the EPA.

In an email response to my request for the *PowerPoint* slides shown in Figure 1.5, however, a teacher with course development responsibilities in both the Physics and Mathematics departments explained that there were limits to the use of diagrams:

In Maths and Physics where there are loads of...tables and graphs projection of Excel...is a great idea, but when it's something dynamic, like algebra or calculus, board is best [otherwise]...[t]he teachers go flat and don't put on a show; students want to see teachers doing difficult [math] and getting it right. (Documentary Data)

It is also clear that Engineering students would need to be able to produce and embed visualised data within their written work (see Figure 1.6). The head of Economics also pointed to the importance of the diagram that was expected in students' writing, describing a DEED - Definition, Explanation, Example and Diagram (Table 4.1) - organisation of rhetorical functions. Table 4.1 shows that the taught rhetorical functions of the EPA (Appendices 19 & 20) are very different to those taught in the local BIZ and ENG subject classes.



**Table 4.1 - Taught rhetorical functions in EPA and subjects**

<b>EPA (Academic Writing)</b>	<b>BIZ (for exam)</b>	<b>ENG</b>
<i>Essay:</i> Introduction (background & thesis statement) Body (topic sentence & supporting sentences) Conclusion (summary & restatement of thesis)	<i>Essay:</i> Definition D Explanation E Example E Diagram D  Note: Evaluation was added in 2011	<i>Laboratory Report:</i> Introduction (& Theory) Equipment Procedure (Industrial) Application Error/Improvements  Note: Example only, actual rhetorical functions varied depending on the specific experiment

With the exception of the conclusion/diagram, the BIZ and EPA taught rhetorical functions shown in Table 4.1 are not necessarily incompatible, although the BIZ coursework also included a report format, the structure of which varied depending on the specific task. The discrepancy between an EPA essay and an Engineering assignment is likely to be greater given that the latter are not essays and explicitly include multiple visuals in the place of written prose (Figure 1.6). This discussion provides important contextual background for the analysis of data presented in sections 5.2.3 and 5.3, and is discussed further in chapter 6.

## 4.5 Summary

This section summarises the main findings related to teacher perceptions of the EPA in preparation for further discussion in chapter 6.

The interview participants offered clear answers to the first of my research questions (§1.4), reporting that the EPA developed in response to significant changes in macro-management and associated commercial interests, coupled with novice EAP managers and teachers. This was reinforced through exam washback, the logistics of time allocation between departments, limited technological classroom resources, and the continuing admission of non-*gaokao* students whose English language proficiency and study skills were at a significantly lower level than teacher expectations.

Teachers voiced several concerns regarding the Exam-Practice Approach to teaching reading and writing (RQ2). EAP skills separated from each other and subject content led to perceptions of purposelessness amongst EAP teachers. Limited technological resources and the perceived purposelessness of teaching materials were seen as symbolic of a general lack of purpose in the Exam-Practice Approach. Teachers argued that EAP materials should look professional and reported that Chinese students benefit from the greater use of visuals in teaching.

Random topics in reading content exacerbate the effects of separateness, obscure pedagogical progression within the materials and demotivate students (Q47). This reduces the recycling of vocabulary and opportunities for language development (Q44 & Q45), which is especially problematic where students do not engage in independent extensive reading outside the classroom. This signals the discourses surrounding a deficit view of Chinese learners (§4.2.4).

Potential solutions to the perceived problems were identified. A course book could prevent randomness and separateness (i.e. recycling of vocabulary and clear progression in teaching content), but there is debate as to whether a suitable book exists. Integration between EAP skills and disciplinary content (ESAP) was proposed as an alternative possible solution, indicating local engagement with discourses surrounding EGAP and ESAP (§2.6), but this might be precluded by time constraints and challenges to interdepartmental collaboration due to conflicting responsibilities (§4.2.3 & 4.3.5).

Conflict was identified between the stated aims of the course and the EAP assessments (Q59 & Q60), problematizing exam washback and, therefore, the central concept of the EPA. The portfolio is seen as symbolic of this self-contradiction (§4.3.6.1) and the appropriateness of the IELTS-like writing exam, which is seen as non-academic (Q61-Q63), was challenged. Concerns were raised that the assessment system reinforces the Chinese cultural importance of exams over the intended emphasis on independent learning. This further foregrounds discourses relating to the deficit model of Chinese learners (§4.2.4).

Finally, it is clear that the separateness and perceived purposelessness of the EPA negatively impacts on teachers' perceptions of their own professional role (Q8, Q29, Q76), a theme I return to in Chapter 6.

# **5. Exploring the Exam-Practice Approach: Text Analysis of EPA Materials**

## **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, teacher concerns about the EPA programme and materials were presented. This chapter focuses on an analysis of the EPA materials to consider whether these concerns can be substantiated in any ways through analyses of classroom teaching texts. This chapter is structured according to RQ3 and its two sub-questions with their more specific focus:

RQ3: What does an analysis of the Exam-Practice Approach reading and writing input materials reveal about their lexis and functional purpose?

- a) How relevant is the vocabulary encountered in the Exam-Practice Approach materials to target situation (academic discipline) writing?

This section includes a comparative corpus analysis of the Business and Economics (BIZ) and Engineering (ENG) corpora and target writing represented by BAWE filtered for undergraduate writing in the Business Studies, Economics and Engineering disciplines (BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE) (methodological details provided in section 3.6).

- b) To what extent is the language taught in the academic writing class encountered in the academic reading material?

This short section presents a comparison of the AW and AR materials using corpus data. I also identify the rhetorical functions of the AR reading passages and compare these to those taught on the Academic Writing programme.

## 5.2 RQ3a: How relevant is the vocabulary encountered in the EPA materials to target situation (academic discipline) writing?

This subsection presents the main findings derived from my corpus-driven Key Word Analyses comparing the EPA reading texts with the BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE reference corpora. This aims to identify the relative relevance of the lexical content of the EPA reading materials by identifying the vocabulary that is positively key and negatively key in comparison to the target situation texts represented by the reference corpora. Words identified as positively key indicate a text's 'aboutness' (Scott, 2010:166) and those identified as negatively key indicates words that are representative of successful undergraduate disciplinary writing but not the BIZ or ENG materials (§3.6.4.2). Table 5.1 provides a summary of the comparisons.

**Table 5.1 - Summary of the corpora being compared**

EPA Corpus	Reference Corpus	Comparing
BIZ	BE-BAWE	EPA reading and writing input for Business and Economics students and target undergraduate disciplinary writing
ENG	ENG-BAWE	EPA reading and writing input for Engineering students and target undergraduate disciplinary writing

Particular categories of lexical items were selected for deeper analysis according to keyness on the KW lists (Appendix 15), and this selection was further narrowed using two criteria: explicitly taught in AW teaching materials and given repeated and/or in depth attention in the interview data by one or more teachers (see §3.6.4.3 for further details). These two criteria do not distinguish between broad categories or specific lexical items. For an item to be considered as *explicitly taught in AW materials*, it needed to be the focus of a specific writing exercise. Other words on the KW lists were excluded, where neither of these criteria was met. The most significant findings were grouped into the six categories shown in Table 5.2. Two categories (three including the AWL) are negatively key despite being taught in the AW materials, which indicates that the reading materials do not

model these categories/items but that they frequently occur in the reference corpora.

**Table 5.2 - Selection criteria for analysis of categories and items**

Category	Items Included	Selection Criteria (by category)		
		Positive (+) or Negative (-) keyness	Explicitly taught in AW materials	Repeated/in depth attention in interview data
Personal Pronouns	<i>you/your he, his, him; they, their</i>	√ (+)	√	√
Transition Words	<i>therefore thus</i>	√ (-)	√	√
Use of Figures, Tables and Formulae	<i>figure table model shown formulae</i>	√ (-)	√	√
AWL	See Table 5.7	√ (-)	*	√
Assessment Washback	<i>IELTS people, countries, Britain, China, smoking ban electric vehicles women, children, girls, boys, family, families, cities, cent, food</i>	√ (+)	*	√
Discipline-Specificity	See Table 5.8 & Table 5.9	√	*	√
* Teaching the AWL was optional; assessment washback was not directly named in the AW materials but the taught structure (Table 4.1) intentionally targeted the exam; subject-specificity was evident in the separation of BIZ/ENG materials and the coursework assignments				

The KW categories in Table 5.2 represent the structure of the remainder of this section. The focus is on comparison between the EPA corpora and their respective reference corpora. In the process variations between the disciplines are observed but this is not explored in this thesis as it is not central to my research questions.

### 5.2.1. Personal Pronouns

Teachers discussed the use of personal pronouns in academic writing and Teacher 1, for example, challenged the EPA 'rule' to avoid using the first person pronoun *I* (see §4.3.6.3, Q66). This pronoun is negatively key on both BIZ and ENG KW lists, meaning it occurs far less frequently in the EPA corpora than the reference corpora. The number of occurrences within each corpus, normalised figures per thousand words (hereafter ptw) and distribution across corpus texts are shown in Table 5.3. Distribution refers to the number of texts that contain at least one occurrence of *I*. The percentage given in brackets refers to the percentage of the whole corpus represented by those texts in which the word *I* is distributed (i.e. *I* occurs on ten BIZ texts, which equates to 15% of the texts in the BIZ corpus).

Table 5.3 – Frequency and distribution of *I* in the four corpora

Corpora	Occurrences		Distribution (%)
	raw	ptw	
BIZ	35	0.85	10 (15%)
ENG	21	0.54	7 (10%)
BE-BAWE	746	2.00	129 (72%)
ENG-BAWE	404	1.21	111 (60%)

Most occurrences in the EPA occur in reported speech and the majority are from one particular text. There is one instance in ENG of the writer directly expressing his position at the start of a passage: *I don't want to live in a city*. The BIZ coursework materials contain three instances of the writer describing the process of his research:

*In a peer-reviewed research article I published a few months ago, I performed an empirical study of the proposed smoking ban...I found a statistically significant result...*

This contrasts with the reference corpora where the majority of cases are a direct expression of the writer's role. In BE-BAWE functions include establishing the purpose of the text (*in this essay I would like*) or explaining what methods the writer had or had not used. Most, if not all are self-referential functioning as 'the architect of the essay', 'the recounter of the research process' or 'opinion-holder' (Tang & John, 1999:S27-S28). By far the most common 3-word strings are *I*

*believe that* (15 occurrences) and *I feel that* (14 occurrences). The former is also observed in AW taught lexis as a lexical sequence that students should avoid in their own writing (the use of pronouns in the EPA materials is discussed further in §5.3). In ENG-BAWE, approximately 347 occurrences (71% of occurrences) are from eleven texts (6% of all texts) reflecting on projects and expressing personal feelings about team work and the validity of the data. The functions are primarily as ‘recounters of the research process’ and ‘opinion-holder’ (ibid.). This is by far the most frequent function of *I* in Engineering students’ papers and reinforces the fact that students may be expected to write in varied genres in their disciplines.

The second person pronoun *you* and the possessive form *your* are ranked as key on the BIZ and ENG wordlists compared to BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE reference corpora. The second person pronouns therefore represent keyness in the EPA reading materials when compared to target undergraduate writing. Table 5.4 shows how this data compares with the frequency of occurrence and distribution across texts in the target disciplinary writing corpora.

**Table 5.4 - Frequency and distribution of *you* and *your***

	<i>you</i>			<i>your</i>		
	occurrences raw	ptw	distribution (%)	occurrences raw	ptw	distribution (%)
BIZ	64	1.56	18 (27%)	39	0.95	10 (15%)
BE-BAWE	83	0.21	32 (18%)	33	0.09	15 (8%)
ENG	70	1.78	19 (28%)	19	0.48	11 (16%)
ENG-BAWE	74	0.18	32 (17%)	9	0.02	6 (3%)

The normalised figures in Table 5.4 show that *you* and *your* occur significantly more frequently in the EPA corpora than the reference corpora and are distributed across a greater percentage of texts. The occurrence of *you* seems to be slightly skewed in BE-BAWE by a high density in one text in particular (*0202j.txt*), which accounts for 27 (33%) of the occurrences in this reference corpus. *Your* also appears with high density on the same paper (39% of BE-BAWE instances). This is perhaps related to its specific ‘problem question’ purpose (Appendix 2). It is clearly atypical for a BE-BAWE text and its exclusion from the corpus would certainly sharpen the contrast between BIZ and the reference corpus. Other than *0202j.txt*, *you* and *your* tend to be associated with instructional content (e.g. questions and prompts) or quotation (direct and indirect).

The ENG-BAWE returned relatively few instances of *you* and *your* (0.18 and 0.02 ptw) across a small number of texts. The four-word string (i.e. contiguous word sequence) *as you can see* was identified by *WordSmith Tools*' clusters tool (Scott, 2010:118; discussed in §2.8), occurring seven times and equating to 9% of occurrences of *you*. In all but one paper this refers the reader to tabulated data (discussed below).

In terms of distribution across texts, *you* and *your* are clearly dispersed across more EPA texts than in the reference corpora (Table 5.4). A closer examination of this distribution reveals that only two ENG and two BIZ texts on which *you* and *your* appear in the EPA corpora are from AW materials. Thus, the second person pronoun is primarily associated with AR reading material that does not explicitly claim to represent academic writing (Table 3.6 shows relative proportions of AW/AR texts).

The BIZ texts from these AW materials consist of selected paragraphs from e-zine articles (Figure 5.1) and are clearly referenced as such.

**Figure 5.1 - E-zine extract (BIZ, AW) showing *you* and *your* in context**

- Is **your** site secure? Does **your** customer know this? There are many incorrect stereotypes about the security of the internet out there. As a result, many of **your** visitors will not want to use their credit card to make a purchase. The fear of having their credit card information stolen is a clear and present danger in the minds of **your** visitors.
  - There is a lot of competition for **your** product already out there. By the time **your** visitor finds **you**, they have already been clicking many links. Unless they can find what they are looking for quickly, they are gone.
  - Many web visitors expect something for free. What do you have to offer them?
- Original source: Smith, C. (2005) [online] Internet Marketing - Advantages and Disadvantages, Available at: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Internet-Marketing--Advantages-and-Disadvantages&id=65052> [Accessed 25th October 2009].

For clarity I have emboldened the words *you* and *your*

The ENG texts from the AW materials are referenced as online reports and are intended as reading material for the ENG assignment. In the AR materials, *you* is generally found in reported speech, as a direct invitation to the reader to consider a hypothetical situation or as persuasion (the relationship between AR and AW materials is discussed in 5.3).



The third person pronouns (*he, his; they, their*) are also key in the EPA materials. Concordance lines indicate this is due to the fact that many of the reading passages report narratives about people (discussed in 5.2.5 below) and also explains the keyness of the relative pronoun *who* in the EPA materials. Figure 5.2 shows the frequent use of personal pronouns in an AR extract that is not a typical feature of reference corpora texts.

**Figure 5.2 - AR sample showing frequent use of personal pronouns**

take three taxis and a damn steam engine into the sticks, and I wanna do business, and this guy gives **me** a 'nice cup of China tea and a biccv'. What IS **he**?" Mind **you**, this was the same man who in Rome told **his** Italian agent that the Colosseum would make a nice parking lot.

It is not so much the cup of tea as the pint of bitter that managers from outside Britain find a bar to efficiency. In the article, a German manager tells how when **he** first took over a job in Britain, **he** discovered that at lunchtime and especially on Fridays, the majority of **his** management team left for the pub. **He** says: "I stopped that right away. Now **they** are not allowed off the premises. It didn't make **me** very popular at the time but it is not good for efficiency. There is no way **we** would do that in Germany.

For clarity I have emboldened the pronouns referring to people

It is also interesting to observe that there are no female personal pronouns on the KW lists even though the noun *women* ranks as most key and second most key for ENG and BIZ respectively. This appears to be due to very few women being cited in BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE papers, which probably reflects the historic reality of there being fewer women in these disciplines, although there are also examples of the generic use of *he* in the EPA texts.

### 5.2.2. Transition Words

The words in this subsection were selected for further analysis because they were ranked on the KW list as having negative keyness despite being explicitly taught in the AW teaching material (Appendix 16). They were also raised as a concern in the interview data (e.g. *for example*, §4.3.6.3, Q65).

The logically cohesive transition word *therefore* is negatively key for both BIZ (-46.41) and ENG (-61.43) compared to BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE respectively, and *thus* appears with negative keyness (-38.76) when BIZ is compared to BE-BAWE. The number of occurrences in each corpus, the normalised frequencies (ptw) and the distribution across texts (including as percentage of corpus texts) are shown in Table 5.5.

**Table 5.5 - Frequency of *thus* and *therefore* in four corpora**

	<i>thus</i>			<i>therefore</i>		
	occurrences		Distribution (%)	occurrences		Distribution (%)
	raw	ptw		raw	ptw	
BIZ	10	0.24	8 (12%)	14	0.34	10 (21%)
BE=BAWE	481	1.12	117 (65%)	536	1.44	134 (75%)
ENG	10	0.18	6 (10%)	7	0.25	8 (15%)
ENG-BAWE	139	0.35	56 (30%)	619	1.55	141 (77%)

Table 5.5 shows these transition words are less frequent and are distributed across a lower percentage of texts in the EPA materials than the target-writing corpora. Furthermore, the simple connector *but* is key on both BIZ and ENG lists; and is also key for BIZ. This may be due to the social topics (see §5.2.5) and reported speech content (Figure 5.2).

I now turn to how these words are used in the Exam-Practice Approach corpora. The BIZ corpus has three instances of *thus* starting a sentence followed by a comma (E.g. *Thus, until comparatively recently, cities had a well-earned reputation for being unhealthy places*); the ENG corpus has only one and that is in a practice test. With the exception of one occurrence ('a woman...describes it **thus**: [reported speech]'), the function is consistent with the taught usage *to show a result* (see example using *consequently* in Appendix 16). There are too few instances (10 BIZ; 7 ENG) to reliably indicate other patterns of use. There is more modelling of *therefore* (14 BIZ; 10 ENG) and BIZ students would encounter five instances of the *Therefore* + comma taught structure as well as three instances of the following structure:

Noun phrase + [would] therefore + verb

Sample: *Smokers would therefore be less productive...*

Students encountered a very limited range of collocations or other associated language structures through the EPA materials, though one might expect them to encounter these in their subject lessons.

An exploration of how these transition words are used in the BE/ENG-BAWE corpora reveals some of the collocations and word associations that students using EPA materials were missing. In BE-BAWE nearly a quarter of the occurrences (95) of *thus* started the sentence, or clause following a semi-colon, as

taught in AW (Appendix 16). A similar proportion at slightly over 20% collocated with *and* (Figure 5.3), a collocation that is absent from the EPA materials.

**Figure 5.3 - *and thus* collocation sample in BE-BAWE**

N	Concordance
1	technology and knowledge are great, <i>and thus</i> nations will strive to
2	level similar to the economic leaders <i>and thus</i> have a higher chance of
3	the model are statistically significant, <i>and thus</i> it could be a potential best
4	because they started at a higher point <i>and thus</i> required a shorter period of
5	and university system to improve <i>and thus</i> increase productivity. The
6	to achieve the desired level of AD <i>and thus</i> unemployment level. Using the
7	a danger of neglecting loyal customers <i>and thus</i> alienating them. They should
8	too direct by asking "difficult" questions <i>and thus</i> jeopardizing his own authority
9	services such as one to one marketing <i>and thus</i> was able to create "superior
10	to be driven by fashion rather than brand <i>and thus</i> brands such as Kelvin Klein

Random sample drawn from seven different texts

A similar pattern is shown for *therefore* in BE-BAWE which is not observed in BIZ, with 18% of occurrences collocating with *and*. The usage of *therefore* following the same *Noun phrase + therefore + verb* structure identified in BIZ (see above) is evident in BE-BAWE (accounting for approximately 6% of occurrences) as exemplified by the following random samples:

*'PRIONICS' therefore is subject to corporation tax*

*Governments therefore should refrain from using these protective mechanisms.*

Collocation was also observed between *thus* and the word family (i.e. the base word and its derived and inflected forms; see §2.8 for discussion on defining words) *increas\**, and 8.5% of instances of *therefore* occurred with formulae. Neither of these patterns occur in BIZ.

The ENG-BAWE results for *therefore* should be of great interest to EAP teachers because of its pronounced association with *FORMULA* (representing a wide range of lengths and types of entity), as displayed in *WordSmith Tools* patterns (Figure 5.4). In fact, *WordSmith Tools* collocates revealed 222 occurrences (approximately 36% of all occurrences) collocate with formulae and further investigation of the referencing within ENG-BAWE texts would likely reveal a greater degree of association.

**Figure 5.4 - Association of *therefore* with formulae in ENG-BAWE**

N	L5	L4	L3	L2	L1	Centre	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
1	THE	THE	THE	THE	AND	THEREFORE	THE	IS	THE	THE	THE
2	AND	TO	FORMULA	FORMULA	FORMULA		FORMULA	THE	OF	TO	OF
3	OF	FORMULA	OF	IT	IS		IT	TO	BE	OF	FORMULA
4	FORMULA	OF	IN	AND	CAN		A	A	FORMULA	IS	BE
5	TO	A	TO	IS	ARE		BE	THAT	IN	BE	TO
6	BE	IS	IS	OF	THIS		THERE	FORMULA	TO	FORMULA	A
7	IN	AND	A	THIS	WAS		I	IN	IS	A	IS
8	IS	FOR	FOR	TO	WILL		WE	AND	A	AND	IN
9	FOR	THIS	AND	BE	WOULD		THEY	2	FOR	FOR	THAT
10	A	BY	AS	IN	3		TO	WOULD	AS	IN	AS
11	ON	IN	BE	1			HAS	ARE	AND	ON	AND
12	THAT	BE	WITH				IF	BE	THAT	AS	FOR
13	AS	WOULD	2				IN	MAXIMUM	BY	THIS	ON
14	1	AS	IT				AN		POSSIBLE	STRESS	THIS
15	IT	EQUATION	MAKE				FOR		AN	THAT	

In some instances *therefore* appears to be functioning as a logical connector as part of the calculation (see Figure 5.5). This indicates the importance of logically referring to formulae in Engineering academic writing; a usage that is not in ENG.

**Figure 5.5 - Collocation of *therefore* with formula in ENG-BAWE**

1	ble, so as FORMULA , FORMULA . Therefore an increased longit
2	ed, 112 V. FORMULA and FORMULA Therefore the values fall wit
3	hich FORMULA FORMULA FORMULA . Therefore FORMULA FORMULA .
4	ng coefficients, a=1, b=2, c=1 Therefore, FORMULA b. There a
5	therefore FORMULA . FORMULA , therefore FORMULA . FORMULA .
6	calculated with Eq.1. FORMULA Therefore, the total pressure
7	the force apply to is FORMULA Therefore, the surface pressu
8	FORMULA FORMULA FORMULA Therefore, the upper yield st
9	ximum when FORMULA and FORMULA therefore substituting gives
10	MULA And Power =1.2kW, FORMULA Therefore, FORMULA The simpli
11	g on both side we get: FORMULA Therefore, Log Y(t) = Log(A 2
12	ORMULA Assuming b = 9m = 27 mm Therefore, bending stress is
13	FORMULA Then, FORMULA FORMULA Therefore, FORMULA FORMULA

Random sample from ten different texts

This collocation of *therefore* and formulae is not a feature that is dispersed across all or even a majority of ENG-BAWE texts and is only observed across 47 texts (just over a quarter of texts in the corpus). Furthermore, 16% of *therefore* occurrences, irrespective of whether they are associated with a formula or not, have the sentence-starting cohesive function that was taught in AW (see example of *consequently* in Appendix 16). This means that the EPA materials do provide some modelling of target writing usage but fail to model expected frequency of usage or the relationship with formulae.

### 5.2.3. Use of Figures, Tables and Formulae

The interview data indicates that using visuals of various kinds would be supported by EAP teachers, especially for ENG students (see section 4.3.2, Q37 - Q40). The words *figure* (-76.74) and *table* (-37.53) occur as a negative key word when ENG is compared ENG-BAWE and the word *model* appears with negative keyness on both KWA lists (-39.55 ENG and -134.38 BIZ). This suggests the use of diagrams or other visual data would be expected in students' academic writing. In this subsection I use the terms *figure* and *table* following the definitions of the tags used in BAWE (from Heuboeck et al's, 2005, *The BAWE Corpus Manual*):

Figures are: graphs, images, drawings etc...inserted into running text. (p.26)

Tables are spans of the text outlined as a row-column intersection...Tables can contain numbers, words or other symbols. (p.27)

The Excel spreadsheet accompanying the BAWE corpus clearly shows that undergraduate Engineering, Economics and Business Studies texts commonly feature figures and tables of some kind (Table 5.6). In fact, the combined statistics for these three would give 220 out of 363 texts (60%) that contain figures and 183/363 (50%) containing tables, so even a general approach to EAP would be expected to foreground visualised data interpretation. Table 5.6 shows the percentage of ENG-BAWE and BE-BAWE texts that contain figures and tables as well as the average number found in those texts. The range shows the large variation in numbers of figures and tables in individual texts. The figures include all text genres but it should be noted that 'methodology recounts' and 'design specification' genres (see Appendix 2) tended to contain higher numbers of figures and tables than 'Essays'.

**Table 5.6 - Figures and Tables in BE-BAWE and ENG-BAWE**

Corpus	Figures			Tables		
	Distribution	Figures per text		Distribution	Tables per text	
	across texts	Average #	Range	across texts	Average #	Range
ENG-BAWE	81%	5	1-47	75%	1.8	1-12
BE-BAWE	40%	1.5	1-15	25%	0.96	1-19

The statistics in Table 5.6 indicate that BIZ and ENG students need to be able to find, adapt or create figures and tables, and to embed them into their undergraduate writing. As discussed in 2.11, this may be particularly important for Chinese students whose writing in the BAWE corpus exhibits a greater reliance on these visual elements (Leedham, 2011:195). However, the EPA materials contain very few non-lexical items of any kind. In fact, in the whole EPA corpus these consist of seven images or diagrams (Appendix 13), two of which are in the ENG coursework materials so BIZ students would only have encountered five visuals in their reading materials. Of course, students would undoubtedly have encountered visual data in their subject lectures (see Figure 1.5 and section 4.4) so there is a disconnect between EPA materials and subject lesson materials here.

The words *figure* and *table* cannot be assumed to be completely representative of the quantities of non-lexical textual elements. Visual data could, for example, also be referred to by words such as *graph* or *diagram* and data could be represented by mathematical equations and calculations (discussed below). It is therefore safe to assume that the importance of visuals and other non-lexical items is greater than the statistics presented below for *figure* and *table* alone suggest.

The word *figure* only occurs twice in the EPA corpora. In both cases it refers to numerical figures cited in the previous sentence. The frequency contrasts with the occurrence of *figure(s)* in the filtered BAWE corpora, with 0.8 ptw in BE-BAWE and 1.56 in ENG-BAWE, with the majority of instances referring to visualised data of some kind and most others consistent with the usage exemplified in the EPA materials. Engineering students in particular are clearly expected to be able to embed figures in their written work with 81% of ENG-BAWE papers containing an average of 5 figures per paper.

There is only one table in the EPA corpora (Appendix 13) and only three occurrences of the word *table*, all from one BIZ coursework reading passage. ENG students did not encounter a single table in their EPA reading materials. This contrasts with the reference corpora where 75% of papers contain 1-12 tables.

The word *model*, which is negatively key in both BIZ (-134.38) and ENG (-39.55) occurs nine times across both corpora. *Model* is used in the sense of a

technological device in the ENG texts (e.g. ‘The Sunbeam model T-9 was patented...’) and it is similarly used to refer to a product in BIZ, where its use in the sense of a theoretical model is also evident. ENG-BAWE includes both of these usages as well as *model* in the sense of a scaled mock-up (physical or virtual). BE-BAWE prefers the theoretical framework sense of *model*, which does not necessarily indicate any form of visual data but in many cases the theoretical referent is visualised in the text as a data table or figure.

The most frequently occurring multi-word strings that refer to figures and tables in the two reference corpora are listed in Table 5.7, showing how undergraduate students refer to figures and tables. There is some similarity between the lexical lists in Table 5.7 and the lexical bundles that Hyland (2009:20) identified as occurring most frequently in Electrical Engineering academic texts (see Table 2.1). Table 5.7 also shows that *figure* and *table* collocate with the words *see*, *seen* (-25.64), *shows* (-49.59) and *shown* (-56.71), with the latter three ranked as negatively key in ENG compared to ENG-BAWE.

**Table 5.7 - 2-5-word strings with *figure* and *table* (BE/ENG-BAWE)**

BE-BAWE		ENG-BAWE	
	ptw		ptw
<i>in figure #</i>	0.13	<i>in figure #</i>	0.47
<i>in table #</i>	0.12	<i>in table #</i>	0.22
<i>(figure #)</i>	0.06	<i>figure # shows</i>	0.14
<i>(see figure #)</i>	0.06	<i>(figure #)</i>	0.11
<i>table # shows</i>	0.05	<i>can be seen in figure #</i>	0.08
<i>(table #)</i>	0.03	<i>can be seen in table #</i>	0.08
<i>as shown in table #</i>	0.03	<i>as shown in figure #</i>	0.07
<i>illustrated in figure</i>	0.03	<i>shown below in figure #</i>	0.04
Note: <i>in figure #</i> is also subsumed in three of the longer lexical strings (ENG-BAWE)			

With a frequency of 0.28 ptw in ENG-BAWE, the 4-word string *can be seen in* would be useful for ENG student writing. The 113 instances of *can be seen in* indicate that it is preferred over *as you can see* (7 instances) as observed in §5.2.1 above. Materials designers might find the following structure particularly useful for ENG students:

Noun phrase + *can be seen in* + non-lexical data or appendix + #

This structure is exemplified in the concordance lines in Figure 5.6.

**Figure 5.6- ENG-BAWE concordance lines showing *can be seen in***

N	Concordance
1	cycles. The results of the plain beam <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Table 6.3, this shows a
2	10 A diagram of how a fracture may look <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Figure 7.5, which shows
3	to variation in strains in the material. It <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Figure 7.2 that the beam
4	before or after the predicted cycles. It <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Figure 7.1 that the plain
5	to a tensile test, the results of which <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Graph 6.4. The results of
6	applied loads on the preloaded beams <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Table 5.5 All of the
7	2. The results of the calculations <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Table 5.4. This table
8	for the fatigue loading calculations <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Appendix 2. The results
9	. The results of these recordings <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Graph 6.5 which was for
10	of the beam with hole, and plain beam <a href="#">can be seen in</a> Graph 6.2 and Graph 6.3

Figure 5.6 shows how the lexical string *can be seen in* and the words *results* (ranked with negative keyness -106.46) and *shows* are related to references to textual elements including various forms of visualised data (figures, graphs and tables), appendices and calculations.

Formulae, equations and calculations (all replaced by 'FORMULA' in BAWE) do not occur in the EPA materials, the word *formula* occurs once (in BIZ only) and there were no AW texts specifically aiming to teach their use in academic writing. In contrast, Engineering papers frequently contain formulae, with 55% of ENG-BAWE texts (102 texts) containing at least one formula. Forms of the word family *formula* occur 0.39 times ptw in ENG-BAWE with *formula* by far the most commonly occurring word-form (0.31 ptw). Dealing with formulae is an important skill for ENG students' writing. Specific lexical bundles are infrequent but an affinity for certain logical connectors between formulae is observable using the words *and* (1.22), *where* (1.04), *therefore* (0.55) and *hence* (0.16 ptw).

Formulae are much less evident in BE-BAWE, with 64 texts (26%) containing them (between 1 and 59 per text) and *formula* occurs with a much lower frequency (0.06 ptw). This suggests that the absence of formulae in the EPA materials is of less concern for the BIZ students than the ENG students.

To conclude this sub-section, it seems reasonable to claim that in terms of dealing with non-lexical forms of data the EPA materials (with no formulae, one table (BIZ only) and only seven images) are inadequately representative of students' target



situation writing. It would be helpful for EAP teachers (particularly those teaching Chinese students) to be aware of the importance of visualised data in BIZ and ENG disciplinary writing (Table 5.6), the lexical sequences used to refer to them (Table 5.7) and the collocates identified in Engineering undergraduate writing (e.g. *therefore*, *formula*; *table*, *shows* and *results*). Whilst this is especially important in ENG students' disciplinary writing, it is also important for local BIZ students because the institution's Business Studies and Economics exams contain essay questions that require the drawing of graphs and diagrams along with an explanation (§4.4, Table 4.1). Thus, in terms of figures and tables, the EPA materials neither represent target disciplinary writing or the writing requirements of the local subject exams. It is also worth noting here that the IELTS writing task 1 requires candidates to respond to visualised data, whereas the UKHQ EAP writing exam did not (task 1 was replaced by a 'Use of English' gap-fill vocabulary and grammar test). Thus, the IELTS writing test is arguably more representative of target situation needs than the local EAP exam. This is consistent with teachers' problematising the AW exam as non-academic (§4.3.6.2) and further extends this problematisation.

#### 5.2.4. AWL

Coxhead's (2000) AWL was discussed in the interview data (§4.3.3.1) and it was introduced as an optional course component towards the end of the EPA period (see Table 1.2). However, it was being introduced unsystematically as an optional extra for teachers and did not feature as an explicit part of materials deemed 'core' (i.e. those that make up the EPA corpora). Eight (BIZ) and ten (ENG) of the negative KWs are AWL words (Table 5.8). Only *data* occurs in both BIZ and ENG negative KW lists and the variation between the two is consistent with Hyland and Tse's (2009) observation that AWL words have discipline-specific distribution patterns. The fact that it is the word *data* that is absent from both lists is consistent with the lack of lexical bundles referring to data (Table 5.7). The approximately 7% AWL distribution found in the EPA reading materials is otherwise consistent with that found in the target disciplinary texts (Miller, 2011), though this says nothing about the similarity of the contextual meaning of the words.

**Table 5.8 - Negative KWs that are on the AWL**

BIZ	data, financial, investment, period, policy, project, strategy, theory
ENG	analysis, data, design, factor, maximum, output, process, required, section, stress

Most of these words occur so infrequently in the EPA materials that patterns of usage do not emerge. However, the BIZ materials featured the following subject-relevant lexical strings: *cost-benefit analysis*, *basic economic theory*.

### 5.2.5. Assessment Washback

This short subsection considers a KW category that was constructed by grouping words indicative of washback from the EPA assessments. That is, the words that are intuitively associated with the general interest nature of general English tests. This is in contrast to the following section on discipline-specificity, and together the consideration of keyness in these two sections can inform the teacher discussion on vocabulary transferability and relevance (§4.3.3).

The words representing keyness in the EPA materials tend to be nouns of people and places. The nouns representing groups of *people*, *women*, *men*, *children*, *family* and *families* occur on both KW lists along with resources for *life* and *living* (ENG): *medical*, *health*, *energy*, *food*. This suggests that the EPA materials have a social topic orientation and is consistent with the relatively high frequency of pronouns referring to people (e.g. Figure 5.2). The nouns *cities*, *home*, *school* and *world* are also found on both lists and are further suggestive of general interest social topics, which also explains the high frequency of *says*. This is also indicative of the non-specialist, general interest nature of IELTS reading tests (IELTS, 2013a) that formed the bulk of the AR materials. The ENG KW list also contains *land*, *country*, *countries* and *Europe*, indicating that discussion of specific locations may be less important for ENG student writing. In fact, the appearance of the words *social* and *economic* on the ENG list along with the Business-related nouns *goods*, *workers*, *money*, *price* and *trade*, suggests that the EPA materials were more oriented towards BIZ than ENG.

Lexis associated with the ENG coursework assignment is identified as key in the ENG corpus: *electric(ity)*, *renewable*, *new*, *age* and *cars*. This does not, however, mean that the coursework assignment was necessarily unrepresentative of

Engineering disciplinary writing. It only indicates that these words are sufficiently dispersed across the ENG corpus texts so their frequent appearance on the coursework materials renders them key.

### 5.2.6. Discipline-specificity

This KW category focuses on the negative keywords and is probably the area of concern for most of the EAP teachers who questioned the relevance of the vocabulary in the EPA materials. To avoid reliance on my own intuition, I asked two local subject teachers from each discipline to rate the negatively key words (excluding those already discussed in the KW categories above) on a five-point Likert Scale of importance (Appendix 21). Those deemed to be important or extremely important by *both* staff members are listed in Table 5.9. It is interesting to note that BIZ lecturers rated *case* and *period* as less than average importance, whereas all of the ENG negative key words were regarded as being of at least average importance.

**Table 5.9 - Negative KWs (EPA) rated important by subject lecturers**

BIZ	ENG
<b>profit</b>	<b>applied</b>
<b>demand</b>	<b>maximum</b>
<b>market</b>	<b>design</b>
<b>capital</b>	<b>analysis</b>
growth	<b>data</b>
firm(s)	<b>value</b>
unemployment	<b>pressure</b>
increase	<b>results</b>
investment	process
production	mass
	factor
	order
	system
	stress
	surface
	output
	load
	force
	material
Emboldened words are those deemed extremely important by both lecturers	

A simple comparison using the *Text Lex Compare* tool

([http://www.lex tutor.ca/text\\_lex\\_compare/](http://www.lex tutor.ca/text_lex_compare/)) shows how many of the ENG negative key words are on Ward's (2009) BEL (see §2.10.1). Twenty-seven words are on both the ENG negative key words list and BEL (Table 5.10), which means they have been identified as words of great importance to foundation year Engineering students and they occur with significantly lower frequency in the ENG materials than the ENG-BAWE corpus. The list in Table 5.10 could, therefore, be regarded as another possible starting point for developers who are trying to make the EAP reading and writing materials more lexically relevant for the ENG students. It is interesting to observe that the words associated with displayed data (e.g. *see*, *table*, *show*) feature prominently.

**Table 5.10 - Negative key words (ENG) that are on Ward's (2009) BEL**

use (66%), value (64%), order (63%), data (57%), system (57%), design (52%), point (52%), process (52%), see (48%), result (47%), table (47%), maximum (46%), section (44%), material (41%), force (40%), show (40%), surface (39%), factor (35%), mass (33%), steel (29%), model (26%), require (18%), apply (17%), follow (14%), analyse (18%)
---

Percentages give the dispersion across ENG-BAWE texts

The data given in Table 5.10 only considers the specific form of the given word and the dispersion across texts will be greatly increased by considering different forms and word families (e.g. *follows* occurs almost twice as frequently as *follow* across 53 (28%) ENG-BAWE texts). This underlines the difficulty in constructing general academic word lists.

### **5.3 RQ3b: To what extent is the language taught in the academic writing class encountered in the academic reading material?**

This section considers the second sub-question of RQ3, comparing the language taught in AW lessons and encountered in the AR passages. This draws on the KW analysis, other corpus-based data and my manual analysis of rhetorical functions (Alexander et al, 2008:48-52) of the reading passages. Both corpus-based and manual analyses enhance the teacher perspectives data where concerns about the separateness of the AW and AR skills were expressed. It should be

remembered that the AR materials were not designed to model AW taught language and that the purpose of academic writing does not entail the faithful reproduction of the lexis or rhetorical functions encountered in reading. However, unless teachers explain the differences between the linguistic and rhetorical structures in reading materials and those expected in academic writing, a confusing model may be presented to students.

The AW materials titled 'Introduction to Academic Style' were taught during the first week of the academic year, and clearly stated 'Rules for academic style' (Appendix 16). These 'rules' were reinforced in six other AW worksheets throughout the academic year as reviewing exercises (i.e. these rules were taught on seven occasions across the 30-week programme). One of these rules is that academic writing 'doesn't use personal pronouns' (Appendix 16). However, *you* and *your* occur at a much higher frequency in the EPA reading material than expected in disciplinary writing (Table 5.4) and inclusive *you* is used to refer to the reader as part of a collective in the function of persuasive rhetoric, as in the following sample from an AR text about vegetarianism (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7 - Inclusive *you* rhetoric in EPA materials

If **you** have ever been without meat or other animal foods for some days or weeks (say, for religious reasons) **you** will have noticed that **you** tend to get physically rather weak. **You** are glad when the fast is over and **you** get **your** reward of a succulent meat meal.

This function, albeit more skilfully worked, is similar to the less dialogic but still inappropriate and problematic 'collective use of *you*' (Mayor, 2006:110) identified in Chinese IELTS writing responses. This particular text includes the use of *you* to position the reader whilst making unsubstantiated claims about vegetarianism. The claims themselves are contestable yet despite this very clear contradiction of the AW 'rules' and academic writing generally, there is no mention of the text's genre and there are no tasks requiring students to consider this use of *you* or the lack of evidence and accuracy in the writer's claims.

A similar use of the pronoun *we* is also observed (my emboldening):

In Western countries **we** eat more nutritiously, **we** are wealthier,  
**we** are healthier and there are more opportunities.

In this particular case, the attempt to persuasively position the reader as part of a collective from 'Western countries' seems especially inappropriate in the China Campus context. Furthermore, this use of *we* continues throughout three paragraphs in this passage yet, again, there are no accompanying tasks or activities on the worksheet drawing students' attention to this rhetoric.

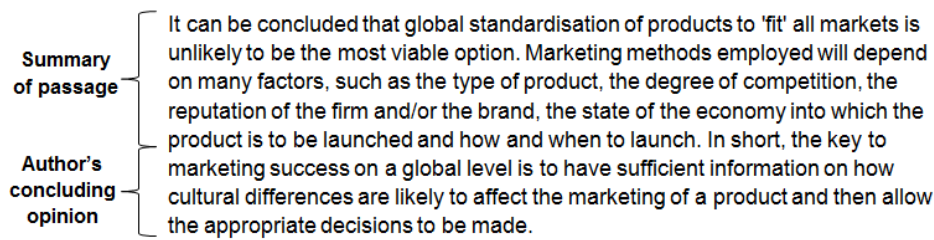
Thus, rhetorical functions and lexis are being modelled that are similar to those taught in Chinese IELTS test preparation courses but that are contradictory to the rules taught in AW - rules that prompted Teacher 1 to express concern over penalties where they are broken (§4.3.6.3, Q67). Where reading materials directly contradict writing instruction, the potential for student confusion is obvious. Although this discrepancy in the teaching materials does not exclude the possibility that teachers noticed it and drew students' attention to it in their own classes, given the reported lack of experience teaching EAP in the department (Q4 & Q7) and the time constraints reported by teachers (§4.2.3), it is safe to assume that the majority of teachers did not.

Differences are also evident in transition words, with *thus* and *therefore* explicitly taught in the AW materials but modelled in AR texts at a much lower frequency than expected in target writing (Table 5.5), and missing some textual associations and collocates. Expressions that were explicitly and repeatedly taught in AW (Appendix 16), such as *it is \* believed* and *it is \* argued* (where \* represents an adverb), do not occur in the AR texts at all. These expressions are not in ENG-BAWE and only occur once in BE-BAWE. The string *it is believed* without any generalising adverb occurs 14 times in ENG-BAWE and five times in BE-BAWE - far fewer occurrences than *I believe that* (Table 5.3), which the taught expression was intended to replace (note the instructions not to use personal pronouns and the recommendation to use the passive forms in Appendix 16). There are 16 occurrences of *it is argued* in BE-BAWE and no occurrences in ENG-BAWE. These taught AW expressions perhaps reflect EAP teacher intuition based on their own educational backgrounds or the influence of folk beliefs (Harwood, 2005:150)

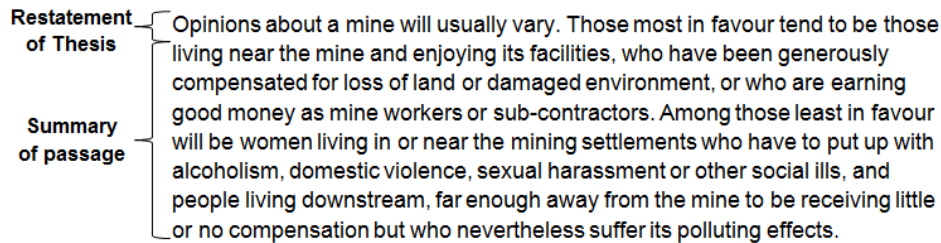
about academic writing from EAP textbooks. Whilst none of these lexical strings occur with high-frequency in any of the corpora, the fact that the strings that the AW materials sought to replace actually occur more often in undergraduate writing than the taught replacement creates a site for potential student confusion. Coupled with the data in Table 4.1, this suggests that a 'hybrid' (Street, 2003b:80) EPA essay genre has been constructed as a response to the dual role of the EAP programme: to prepare students for university study and to pass the gate-keeping EAP exams. This hybrid could be classified as 'pseudo-academic style', drawing on both lexical strategies aimed at IELTS task 2 essays (with which most China Campus EAP teachers would be very familiar) and superficially 'academic' features without due consideration of their function. Whilst the data presented in this section indicate that such a 'hybrid' might be potentially confusing, the concept of a local hybrid style of writing is not necessarily regarded in a negative light by EAP teachers (4.3.6.3, Q72).

A wide range of rhetorical functions were identified through my analysis of the AR passages (see Appendix 18, and Appendix 19 for sample of working). Whilst it is difficult to define a typical passage, the rhetorical functions taught in EPA Academic Writing are well represented at the paragraph level in that there are distinct introductions (with background information and/or definitions) followed by explanatory or persuasive (argumentative) body paragraphs. In fact, paragraphing that is broadly consistent with straightforward *explanation-to-example* or taught AW *cause-and-effect* (see Appendix 14) rhetorical functions are identifiable in 26 of the 57 AR passages (Appendix 18). In this respect, these texts are structurally similar to the BIZ DEED rhetorical functions, or rather BIZ DEE\* because the final D (the diagram) is conspicuously missing (§5.2.3; Appendix 13). Conclusions at the paragraph level are less frequent with only 11 out of 57 passages exemplifying this feature (Appendix 18) and there are only four that might arguably meet the requirements of the taught AW rhetorical functions shown in Table 4.1 and Appendix 20. Two of these are reproduced below as examples (Figure 5.8 & Figure 5.9). It is also worth noting here that there are no tasks accompanying the AR materials that require students to consider the argumentative rhetorical style that led to them (e.g. writer's bias, logical validity).

**Figure 5.8 - Concluding paragraph in Academic Reading passage**



**Figure 5.9 - Concluding paragraph in Academic Reading passage**



Given the relative lack of concluding textual features in the AR passages, it is not surprising that the AW taught transitions *In conclusion* and *To conclude* do not occur in the BIZ or ENG corpora. Indeed, the lexical strings *It can be concluded* and *In short*, functioning as conclusion-signaling transitions in Figure 5.8, are unique in the AR passages. The word *conclusion* actually appeared as a key word in the EPA corpora before removal of the instructional and task-related language, so it is something that is being foregrounded in the AW teaching materials but is not being modeled in the student reading passages.

Furthermore, whilst the majority of introduction paragraphs are consistent with AW taught rhetorical functions (containing background information with many including what could be classified as a 'Thesis Statement'), there are also eight passages that use a 'hook' as might be expected in journalistic features narrative writing (see Curtis, 2011 for explanation; Appendix 18). Figure 5.10 shows an example of such a hook that positions the reader as a participant in an imaginative science-fiction themed narrative which functions as an attention-grabbing device.



**Figure 5.10 - Functional 'hook' from an AR passage introduction**

It is the year 2050, and you are flicking through a booklet of advertisements for the latest gadgets, looking for a present for the friend who has everything. You spot it; a compact disc holding their complete genome - a personal record of the DNA that helps to mould their physical and mental characteristics.

The important point here is that a particular rhetorical function is being modeled that, if the students were to use in their own writing, might result in a loss of marks (Q69). This lends support to the concerns raised by Teacher 1 regarding the simple prescriptive teaching of academic writing conventions (§4.3.6.3) and suggests that students need to be made aware of the different rhetorical functions used in different written genres so they can understand and ultimately decide which are appropriate to employ in their own writing. Although the taught AW rhetorical functions (Appendix 20) are consistent with many of the rhetorical functions identified in the AR passages (Appendix 18), it is clear that these do not precisely map on to the 'essay types' covered in the EPA programme (Appendix 14). Indeed, the 'body paragraphs' of AR passages exemplify a mix of rhetorical functions from different essay types at both the paragraph macro-function level and within paragraphs so unless students are made aware of this, the prescriptive teaching to these specific essay types is overly simplistic. Add to this the range of genres that students may be expected to deal with in their disciplines (Appendix 2) and the increasingly innovative assessments being employed by universities (Leedham, 2009), it seems that tasks focusing on identifying rhetorical functions and genres would probably prove more useful than prescribed 'essay types'.

Although reading materials locally classified as belonging to Academic Writing were excluded from the rhetorical functions analysis on the basis that they were specifically written to exemplify the taught written structure, it is worth briefly considering the AW coursework materials (§1.3.5, p.29). These accounted for six texts (or 9% of texts) in both the BIZ and ENG corpora that consisted of reading passages that were similar in format and layout to the AR reading passages (e.g. Figure 1.3). They were bundled together in a pack with an instructional front sheet, which provided details of the particular assessment, and were explicitly intended as reading for writing. They are interesting because they represent the first step towards the post-EPA integration of Academic Reading and Academic Writing,

and introduction of ESAP. These texts feature headed sections and, unlike most of the other EPA reading materials, they contain bulleted lists and formal in-text references to external texts (there were only two instances on two separate papers in the 57 AR passages analysed for rhetorical functions listed in Appendix 18). They also feature two of the six images found in the EPA corpora (Appendix 13) and the only sample of tabulated data (see section 5.2.3). These texts do not contain *you* or the transition words *thus* or *therefore*, with the former consistent with target academic writing (§5.2.1) but the latter less so (§5.2.2).

## 5.4 Summary

This section summarises the main findings related to the textual analysis of the EPA, answering RQ3 (1.4) in preparation for further discussion in chapter 6.

Compared to target disciplinary writing, the EPA reading passages exhibited a much higher frequency of second and third person personal pronoun use (Table 5.4) despite the AW ‘rule’ not to use personal pronouns (Appendix 16), and the usage of *you* in the EPA reading material contains IELTS-like structures (Figure 5.7). *Thus* and *therefore* are under-represented in the EPA reading materials (Table 5.5) despite being specifically taught as signal words in Academic Writing class, which is consistent with EAP teacher perceptions of separateness between the two skills areas (chapter 4). This separateness is also evident in the rhetorical functions taught in AW (Appendix 20) and identified in the reading passages (Appendix 18) that differ from those taught in BIZ and ENG (Table 4.1), although the most commonly occurring rhetorical functions in the AR passages are consistent with AW and BIZ instruction. A conspicuous lack of visual data is also identified. Indeed, non-lexical data textual elements (figures, tables, models and formulae) are either severely under-represented compared to the reference corpora or entirely absent from the EPA materials. As a result, associated lexis is missing (Table 5.6, Table 5.7 and Table 5.10). This is possibly the most serious problem highlighted through my text analysis and was identified as a priority by both BIZ and ENG faculty (§4.4).

The coursework assignment materials are the only EPA texts that include a report and feature tabulated data, an annotated diagram and formal references to

external sources. As such, these texts possess most textual similarity to target disciplinary writing.

# 6. Discussion and Conclusions

## 6.1 Introduction

My aims in this chapter are:

- to answer RQ4: *What does a combined analysis of answers to RQs 2 and 3 reveal about the nature, purpose and potential limitations of the Exam-Practice Approach?*
- to consider the limitations of the study and scope for further research
- to indicate the personal, local and global pedagogical implications of this study

## 6.2 RQ4: What does a combined analysis of answers to RQs 2 and 3 reveal about the nature, purpose and potential limitations of the Exam-Practice Approach?

This section draws together the findings from teacher perspectives (chapter 4) and text analysis of Exam-Practice Approach materials (chapter 5) to answer my fourth research question.

Teacher views about separateness, randomness and purposeless of the EPA were documented (§4.3.7). Although some areas of overlap were observed in the AR and AW materials, these appear to have been accidental (see §5.3). The separate skills and unrelated topic content were perceived to take away opportunities for vocabulary recycling, interfering with both vocabulary acquisition and transferability of EAP skills to subject studies (§4.3.3), and making the purpose of the EPA programme unclear (Q29). The perceived lack of academic purpose by teachers (see §4.3.6.2, and 4.3.7) on the EPA course is evidenced to a certain extent in the in the teaching materials, which lack modeling of academic disciplinary writing (§5.2) and lack visuals and their associated lexis (5.2.3). Despite the lack of clarity around academic purpose, the EPA programme, teaching materials and exams were all presented as ‘academic’ to the students - headed and/or titled ‘academic reading’ and ‘academic writing’ and taught in

distinct AR and AW classes. Thus a confused and misleading model of academic reading and writing practice was presented to students in EPA course materials.

These observations are supported by the corpus-driven findings. For example, the relatively high frequencies (5.2.1) and non-academic usage of second person personal pronouns (Figure 5.7) in EPA reading passages means students are reading texts with inappropriate interpersonal distance when compared to typical styles of undergraduate disciplinary writing. This may be a contributory factor to the inappropriate tenor, in its SFL sense, that Griffiths (2010) identified in BIZ students' writing at China Campus (§2.6) and is likely to reinforce the problematic dialogic features (e.g. collective use of *you*) commonly observed in Chinese students' writing more generally (e.g. Mayor, 2006; see §2.4). This is also demonstrative of a confusing mismatch between the AR passages and the AW 'rule' to avoid personal pronouns (Appendix 16). This mismatch between taught reading and writing is also evident where AW taught lexis is consistent with disciplinary writing (e.g. *thus* and *therefore*) but negatively key in the reading materials and not modelled for students in running text (5.2.2). This could, of course, be due to the fact that the majority of reading materials were not intended as models of academic writing and some AR passages did have similar rhetorical functions to those taught in AW and BIZ (DEED)(see Table 4.1 and Appendix 18). However, the typical features of the EPA reading materials are nevertheless notable for the lack of lexical strings and collocates associated with undergraduate writing in the BIZ and ENG disciplines; missing conclusions (5.3), diagrams, tables and formulae (5.2.3); and conflicting messages about the appropriacy of personal pronouns (5.2.1). None of these issues are the subject of focus for accompanying tasks and activities in the materials, nor do the worksheets draw attention to differences in reading materials and expected written work. The view thus emerges that the EPA materials provide misleading and inadequate preparation for the development of the writing skills required for BIZ and ENG undergraduate students. The fact that the materials do not adequately model disciplinary academic writing does not preclude the possibility that teachers identified this and used their own materials to fill the gaps (i.e. 'materials-in-action', Harwood, 2014:11). However, the time constraints frequently cited in the interview data (4.2.3) suggest this is unlikely. Nevertheless, since teachers reported concerns

about the academic purpose of the materials, it is possible that they drew students' attention to this issue orally. Although none of the teachers stated that they did so, Teacher 5 commented that he directed students to check for inappropriateness in their lexical choices by entering them in the *Google* search engine and to be wary if 'it just doesn't come up or it comes up all Chinese language websites' (Teacher 5).

The findings presented in chapter 4 are clearly consistent with Qi's (2005) observations: time constraints, lack of material resources, issues with school management practices, concerns over the excessive use of multiple-choice, and teaching to test content and format (discussed in §2.3). This suggests that the issues with the Exam-Practice Approach that were identified in the China Campus context developed in response to test washback from the UKHQ's IELTS-like EAP exams, a view that is explicitly stated by the teachers themselves (see Q53, Q58, Q59 & Q60). The view that the EPA provides a misleading and inadequate preparation for undergraduate study is therefore consistent with concerns that IELTS test preparation would be unwise for teaching English for academic purposes (e.g. Moore and Morton, 2005; Green 2005), and supports the notion that such an approach is inadvisable (§2.4).

The resultant lack of clarity of purpose throughout the EPA programme and materials was a source of frustration for teachers that seems to have led to a loss of confidence in their professional role in the China Campus context (see Q2, Q3, Q7, Q8, Q10, Q18, and §4.3.7). Considered together, the data from teacher perspectives and textual analysis strongly suggest that an EAP programme needs a clear academic purpose - if possible one that includes explicit links to target disciplinary genres - and a method of assessment that is consistent with that purpose.

I conclude this section with a brief discussion of what I see as the three most important findings in this study: possible teaching solutions (ESAP and/or course book), visuals and challenging the assessment.

### 6.2.1. Potential Teaching Solutions: ESAP and Course Book

Teachers indicated two possible solutions to the problems of separateness, purposelessness and randomness: an ESAP approach and/or the use of a course book.

### 6.2.2. ESAP

By developing EAP teaching materials from actual subject texts, discrepancies between conventions of disciplinary writing and EAP writing would be reduced. The focus on the confusing AW 'hybrid genre' model of writing (see §5.3) that has no clear academic purpose and has even led to students being taught misleading lexical chunks could also be minimized, or at least the differences between the AW hybrid genre and disciplinary writing could be taught. Differences in lexis and rhetorical functions between target disciplinary writing and EAP writing and reading would be reduced, and where differences remained, it would be more likely that they represented differences between *academic reading* and *academic writing* rather than being blurred by differences in wide-ranging topic content. Furthermore, the use and function of key lexical features could be made explicit in EAP teaching. For example, the use of personal pronouns can be demonstrated with reference to authentic model texts and the 'appropriacy' of their use for a given genre could be discussed. Thus, students are at least given a chance to understand what language is appropriate for a given purpose (i.e. an awareness of genre; 2.5), to try to marry the concepts of linguistic appropriacy and social purpose in their own minds, and may then be able to make decisions themselves over the kind of words they choose to express their own position in their writing. In the long-term, they may be able to take ownership of their writing and establish their own critical voice in their academic writing, an aim that Teacher 1 in particular clearly supported (Q69 & Q70). Such a model of teaching ESAP would be highly consistent with the concept of genre as a site of tension between competency and expert (see 2.5) and could theoretically put learners on the path to becoming experts rather than aiming for a minimally or nearly competent performance in a non-academic EAP exam (4.3.6.2).

The difficulties in attempting extensive reading under the time constraints of the course could be avoided by prioritising teaching of lexical items according to frequency of use in discipline-related texts or as required for disciplinary studies.

The 'common-core hypothesis' (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001:16-18) suggests that the first 2000 words will be encountered frequently in disciplinary texts just as they would be in general interest texts. Frequency-ranked corpus word lists derived from disciplinary texts would provide a systematic means of identifying academic vocabulary (Nation & Coxhead, 2001:256; discussed in 2.9) and of moving students from 2000 to 3000 words, which was of particular concern to Teacher 10 (Q45). This is consistent with Grabe and Stoller's (2002:78) recommendation that vocabulary should focus on the first 2000 words and then discipline-specific lexis, with the advantage, where time constraints are an issue, that both lexical sets are being encountered simultaneously. Such a systematic vocabulary teaching strategy is likely to be more effective than the EPA random or incidental learning only.

This suggests that in the limited class time available for EAP, the non-*gaokao* students would benefit much more from being taught rhetorical functions and lexical chunks that are directly relevant to their own disciplinary writing needs. This supports Hyland's (2009) argument for discipline-specificity (2.9) and a genre-based ESAP approach to curriculum design in this context. However, this line of reasoning does not provide a solution to concerns regarding the limited time available to properly implement an ESAP programme (Q15), and the lack of immediate relevance of ESAP for the EAP exams (Q53) raises logistical difficulties in the scheduling of departmental time for its planning and implementation. Nor does it provide a comprehensive rebuttal of Spack's (1988) argument that an EAP teacher cannot be expected to learn a secondary discipline (i.e. BIZ or ENG), as Teacher 12 was well aware (Q55). Teacher 8 even hinted at moving some of the responsibility for teaching EAP within the disciplines themselves (Q54), which is consistent with Griffiths' (2010) recommendations (see 2.6) and the arguments put forward by advocates of Writing in the Disciplines where 'writing instruction is firmly embedded in the discipline's curriculum, and to a certain extent delivered by subject lecturers' (Wingate & Tribble, 2012:486).

### 6.2.3. Textbook

The introduction of a textbook was widely regarded by participants in this study as an alternative potential solution to the problems of the EPA (§4.3.4). Teachers believe that an appropriate textbook would solve the logistical and some of the



conceptual issues surrounding the separation of the four EAP skills, which is clearly consistent with Gu's (2010) claim that a textbook can help provide a unified and integrated learning experience (§1.3.1). However, teachers were unclear whether available EAP textbooks and ESAP are mutually consistent, reflecting Harwood's (2005) concerns about the reliability and appropriateness of EAP textbooks. Teacher 10's (Q50) assumption that it would provide a systematic approach to vocabulary development is questionable (Harwood, 2014:3). Furthermore, due to the Chinese traditional authority and classroom centrality of textbooks (Hu, 2002:97/8) (§1.3), an ill-fitting textbook might be as misleading to Chinese students as the IELTS-style readings it aims to replace, which was a particular point of concern for Teachers 7 and 12 (Q51). Recommendations from BIZ and ENG faculty (4.4) may help in this regard.

It therefore remains unclear whether a textbook or ESAP or both would be the preferred solution in the China Campus context. The differentiation of '*materials as they are* and *materials-in-action*' (Harwood, 2014:11) and the possible tendency for inexperienced teachers to stick closely to the textbook (p.12) would also need to be considered. Professional development for EAP teachers, including greater contact with BIZ and ENG faculty would likely ease the effective implementation of either solution but this would require time, which is already perceived to be a serious constraint (§4.2.3).

#### 6.2.4. The Place of Visuals

The evidence that learning how to use visuals should be a necessary component in EAP provision is overwhelming (5.2.3). ENG students in particular will need to manipulate figures, tables and formulae with great frequency in their academic literacy practices. This is highly consistent with the observation that in the sciences 'pointing to graphs and findings...[or] referring to tables or figures...[are] among their most frequent [lexical] strings' (Hyland & Tse, 2009:122).

EAP teachers and faculty at China Campus indicated that the non-*gaokao* students described in this context respond positively to visuals (Q37, Q38 & Q39). Diagrams might enhance teaching and help in the transmission of EAP skills, providing a springboard from which students could produce subject-related language (Q40). Use of visuals in EAP is consistent with local disciplinary lecture

*PowerPoints* and writing practices (Figures 1.5, 1.6 & Table 4.1), Hyland and Tse's (2009) evidence from lexical bundles, Leedham's (2011) identification of increased reliance on visuals as a writing strategy amongst Chinese undergraduates, and the observed trend towards the visual in university texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:107). The professional EAP teacher will need to understand and keep up-to-date with the increasing use of visuals and the impact of these features on a text to ensure their teaching is consistent with current practices of writing in the disciplines.

The most important point is that visuals are a necessary feature of academic reading and writing in the ENG and BIZ disciplines, perhaps especially so for Chinese learners.

#### 6.2.5. Challenging the Method of Assessment

The concept of teaching to a non-academic exam assessment that requires writing based on personal experiences is self-contradictory where the use of expressions of personal stance are forbidden because they are contrary to local interpretations of 'academic style'. This led to the teaching of a 'hybrid genre' (§5.3) that was not representative of target disciplinary genres, and created a rift between the assessment method and the academic purpose of EAP. EAP teachers in China Campus were clearly aware of this issue (4.3.6.2) and held contrasting views regarding how to teach academic writing under these circumstances (4.3.6.3). This rift was most evident in the portfolio (4.3.6.1) where the heavily scaffolded process of creating measurable and assessable work became divorced from the purpose of the final product, which is an identified issue with Process Writing approaches (Ivanič, 2004:231).

The AR test is similarly identified as problematic because the random topic content of passages (§4.3.3; Appendix 1) make the purpose unclear (Q74). When such random reading material directs the teaching content, as it did in the EPA, the result was a perceived lack of systematic vocabulary development, and opportunities for vocabulary recycling were reduced (Q30, Q31, Q44 & Q45). As Teacher 12 observed, there is a mismatch between the mission and practice (Q60), which is even more problematic because it reinforces the students' cultural expectation to focus on the multiple-choice exam format when the major aim of the

course is precisely the opposite. This is consistent with Qi's (2005) observation that the excessive use of multiple-choice tasks can lead to 'teaching to the test format, and automatizing test performance' (p.155). It also supports Griffiths' (2010) suggestion that by focusing on multiple-choice tests, such reading may be less helpful in preparing students for their disciplinary writing in the China Campus context.

If an advanced English assessment with no clear academic purpose (other than entry-requirement) is required, it would be helpful for students to be made aware of the differences between the reading and writing skills required for the 'EAP' exams and those required for their coursework and disciplinary studies. Exam preparation classes could, for example, be clearly and unambiguously labeled something other than EAP - *Advanced English* perhaps. Alternatively, China Campus students could take the external IELTS writing test as the gate-keeping exam, which is arguably more relevant than the AW exam because it maintains the link between visualised data and student writing (5.2.3). This would make it easier for EAP teachers to make a clearer distinction between academic writing for students' disciplinary studies (ESAP) and test practice, thus reducing the confusion that stems from EPA purporting to be both. This would, however, have major implications for the relationship between China Campus and the UKHQ and is something that both parties should be aware of.

A solution can be envisaged similar to that of Cambridge International Examination's iGCSE Directed Writing exam which effectively combines the AR and AW exams. Such a solution was proposed by the UKHQ 'based on two interrelated texts which the students have to read in tandem and address critically - and the writing essay will be based on these texts' (UKHQ Communication). This, however, has not yet been realized. A revised portfolio assessment was suggested by teachers (4.3.5 and 4.3.6.4). Following Hyland's (2007) recommendation, this could allow for systematic genre awareness, including reflection on differences of personal pronoun use, transitional devices, visualized data and rhetorical functions across different genres of academic text. However, given the difficulties the portfolio has caused - with strong views expressed, describing it as 'monstrous' (4.3.6.1) and 'malpractice' (Q57) - it may be prove difficult to persuade teachers of its value in the China Campus context.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study and Further Research**

There are strengths and limitations to case study research. The value of this - and indeed any - specific case study is in the contextually specific and rich detail that it gives rise to which both illuminates a phenomenon in a particular site and raises questions that can be explored in other specific sites. The study discussed in this thesis took place in one specific institutional context so it is uncertain how many of the findings can be generalized to other cases in the region and beyond. Similarly a limited number of EAP teachers participated. More cases could be studied and a more comprehensive survey of teachers in the region could be undertaken.

The methodology used to obtain my qualitative data has both positive attributes and some short-comings. The use of participant observation and documentary data allowed me greater access as a researcher to the details of and involvement in the China Campus EPA context. However, the fact that I was involved as participant in the research context means that despite my precautions (§3.4 & 3.5.1), my presence will have had some influence on the results. Checking the interview data with the participants, whilst undoubtedly increasing the validity of the study, was used only after I had already completed preliminary coding and categorization of the interview data (3.5.1). Validity and reliability might have been further increased if I had allowed the participants themselves greater involvement in the construction of thematic categories. Although, this member-checking (Bryman, 2004) informed the later rounds of my iterative interview data analysis, to reduce the risk of error due to my own participant-perspectives influencing my interpretation of the data, it would have been a more robust research design if I had engaged a co-researcher to independently code and categorise the interview transcripts. The resultant categories could then be compared to those I generated and the extent of agreement would determine the final categories presented in Chapter 4. In this way better triangulation - that is increasing the reliability of findings by using more than one approach to the investigation - would be achieved not only through the use of multiple sources of data, but also in the use of more than one investigator (Denzin, 1989). Furthermore, corpus analysis and comparison software could be used in the coding process, grouping semantically related lexis to further reduce the reliance on my own intuition and interpretation.

The data presented in chapter 5 does not include Discipline-Textbook reference corpora. Thus, the comparison of EPA materials and target situation texts (writing and reading) remains incomplete. A more specific focus for possible further study that could prove useful to EAP practitioners in China Campus would be to compare the EAP materials against the actual local subject texts, assuming the local political situation is amenable to such an undertaking.

There are also limitations in terms of how representative BAWE is of target situation writing. It is undergraduate disciplinary writing that received 'grades of at least 60 per cent...consistent with the award of an upper second class (2:1) or first class honours degree' (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:7), but further analysis would be required to map lexical usage to the relative competency of the writer. For example, first year undergraduates might tend to use a particular chunk which may be less evident by year three. So although lexical chunks derived from BAWE paint an accurate picture of successful undergraduate usage in the disciplines, it does not necessarily indicate the most valued usage. Other limitations include the range of universities (three universities that were not partners of China Campus) and disciplines within the universities, as well as the range of students who contributed their work to the BAWE corpus. Furthermore, only electronic texts were used and the corpus does not include, for example, *PowerPoint* presentations or handwritten exam papers. Thus, BAWE is only a sample of undergraduate writing in the UK but it can be considered representative of such writing. For China Campus, the ideal research solution would be to compile reference corpora from successful undergraduate papers at the partner universities to represent target situation writing.

Whilst the frequencies of visualized data and associated lexical patterns are presented in this thesis (§5.2.3), there is no analysis of how these are actually embedded in the texts or consideration of the impact on formatting, layout, etc. (raw data is provided in Appendix 13). The data presented does, however, clearly show that this is an important area for consideration in EAP teaching, and is likely to be an equally important avenue for further study.

Finally, it is necessary to reiterate that the textual analyses of the EPA reading materials (Chapter 5) did not include the tasks and activities that formed part of the

materials. Therefore, this thesis does not present any consideration of how these materials were used by teachers in class - 'materials-in-action' (Harwood, 2014:11). This is important because EAP 'is defined as much by the activities performed within it as by its typical language forms and meanings' (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001:17). The reading materials can be said to be unrepresentative as models of academic writing in the disciplines but it cannot be claimed on the basis of these findings that teachers were not able to make students aware of these discrepancies, perhaps by introducing their own material. The common concerns regarding time constraints (§4.2.3), however, suggests this is unlikely but a study of materials-in-action might nevertheless be another useful channel for further research in the China Campus context.

## **6.4 Implications for Practice**

This short section outlines the implications of this study from personal, local and global pedagogical perspectives and where appropriate makes clear recommendations for managers and curriculum developers.

### **6.4.1. Implications for Personal Practice**

Completion of this thesis and the study underpinning it has been a long but rewarding intellectual journey from my initial exploration of critical pedagogies and theories of contextual politics and power struggles, through learning about corpus tools and corpus-driven methodology to the construction of sets of criteria to enable analysis across widely differing data sets. This included making an enquiry to the Corpora List (<http://mailman.uib.no/listinfo/corpora>) and construction of a Physics and Engineering Subject Textbook (PEST) corpus, which was ultimately excluded from this thesis. This was because it was not possible to show that the selected texts that formed PEST were sufficiently indicative of the ENG students' target reading material. Nevertheless, it did raise interesting questions for further research such as why is *you* so frequent in the AR materials rather than *we*. The latter frequently functions where the writer acts as a guide for the reader (Tang & John, 1999:S26-S28) and is considered 'fairly non-threatening...[as it] presupposes the congenial accompaniment of the reader' (p.S32), which would be appropriate in an instructional text. My research also included an attempt to analyse the tasks and activities surrounding the EPA reading materials and

analysis of the images that were present. However, these analyses are also excluded from this thesis as it became clear that they represent significant research projects in their own right. The main implications for my own professional practice are presented in this short subsection.

The main implication for my professional practice is that any 'EAP' programme, materials and assessments need to have a coherent academic purpose. I am therefore an advocate of an ESAP approach, but acknowledge that students may need English language input beyond their disciplinary subject (e.g. to prepare for a move overseas).

The valuable information derived through interviews shows how useful peer discussion of pedagogical issues can be; suggesting that scheduling team meetings or professional development sessions would be worthwhile. Assuming that electronic versions of texts can be collected, corpus tools offer a very valuable method for the identification of target situation lexis (in China Campus this is understood to be the BIZ and ENG disciplines), and could therefore be used in the development of a vocabulary-led curriculum. Concordancing offers the teacher/student insight into how lexis is used in context thus removing over-reliance on intuition and its misleading consequences. Some of the data presented in Chapter 5, for example, the lexical bundles associated with figures and tables in the BAWE corpora (see Table 5.7), might be useful in materials production. Finally, during the course of my research I have developed a particular interest in the use of visuals and how these relate to the lexical elements of texts, especially in digital texts. I see this as an important area of research arising from my EdD study that I will pursue in the future.

#### 6.4.2. Implications for Local Pedagogical Practice

First and most important is the simple fact that the EAP exams have no clear academic purpose beyond their gate-keeping role and due to exam washback (§2.3), this has led to confusing teaching content and practices that are viewed as non-academic (§4.3.6). It is recommended that the exams are challenged as non-academic and modified/replaced, or that the name of the exams (or even the programme) is changed from EAP to a label that better reflects the exams - perhaps 'Advanced English'. The UKHQ and the local China Campus

management had, in fact, opened up dialogue on the subject of assessment at the time of data collection for this study (4.3.6.4).

The teaching of traditional 'rules' for writing may need to be challenged as inappropriate, and conventions that are taught should be consistent with and dependent on the students' target situation needs, as far as it is possible to identify them. In the China Campus context, this means some explicit links are needed between EAP and the students' disciplinary studies. Whilst it is not certain how this can be achieved (see §4.3.5 and 4.4), consistency between the EAP department and target disciplinary departments would present a less confusing model of academic reading and writing to students. Genre-awareness and ESAP may prove useful in this respect (§2.5 and 2.6), although given the range of genres in the disciplines (Appendix 2), attempting to anticipate and present them all in a foundation year EAP programme would be extremely challenging if not impossible. The effectiveness (or otherwise) of the ESAP component could be investigated in the post-EPA programme.

EAP teachers and faculty need to be aware that academic texts in the BIZ and ENG disciplines use figures, tables and formulae (§5.2.3) and students therefore need to be able to interpret, manipulate and produce these. L1 Chinese students may rely on such visual support more than many other groups of EAP students (§2.11 & 4.3.2), and it is possible that those with lower English proficiency may exhibit even greater reliance (another potential direction for future research).

Institutional support for professional development and teacher training in EAP is arguably needed and there is no indication that this would be opposed by EAP teachers, except where it impacts on existing time constraints (4.2.3). In particular, understanding of genre pedagogies (see §2.5) would provide a means of analyzing the rhetorical functions and language features of target situation (BIZ or ENG) texts and could help EAP teachers move away from the teaching of potentially confusing local 'hybrid' genres that only target the EAP writing exam (§5.3). EAP teachers may also need training in the design principles underpinning the relationships between visual data and written texts.

Investment in professional development training and technological resources would give course developers the power afforded by corpus tools to analyse target



texts (i.e. BIZ and ENG) to ensure relevance of taught lexis and construction of a vocabulary-focused EAP curriculum (§2.10). With still more investment in technological resources and professional development, such target texts could be shown on the board so teachers can visually draw students' attention to salient textual features of the genre, and in-class concordancing (2.10.1) could empower them to check their own language themselves.

#### 6.4.3. Implications for Global Pedagogical Practice

The non-admission of non-*gaokao* students to the programme would no doubt have proved popular with EAP teachers and would solve many of the documented problems at China Campus. However, here the seemingly oppositional forces of commercialization of education (McArdle-Clinton, 2008; §1.3.3 & 1.3.7) and the more empowering aim of accommodation and inclusion rather than exclusion actually combine to make it unlikely that these students from non-traditional backgrounds will be rejected. In the context of increasing globalization of tertiary education (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:1; Nesi & Gardner, 2012:3), perhaps of greater value to stakeholders would be a system capable of accommodating these numbers of relatively low-level unmotivated learners, thus continuing to provide access to the traditionally excluded groups, while also maintaining the capacity to challenge higher-level learners. This would be particularly valuable if achieved whilst balancing the pedagogical aims of different stakeholders (i.e. students, educators and administrators). Thus, a way of accommodating these non-*gaokao* students needs to be found that puts them on the path to academic success and ensures that they are not seen as a liability (Cross & Hitchcock, 2007:5-7). It is my contention that an EAP course with a clear academic purpose could be achieved by establishing a curriculum that is consistent with the target situation, which can be identified in consultation with teachers from the students' intended disciplines. This might offer a way to reconcile the conflicting perspectives of students and managers on the one hand, and teachers on the other (§1.3.7), by providing one overarching goal that is consistent with the aims of the three stakeholders - teachers, students, managers. It is hoped that the findings of this current research may provide some assistance in that endeavor by highlighting the need for assessment to reflect intended teaching practice (§2.3, 2.4 & 4.3.6.2) or by making

the differences between *English for English Test* and *English for Academic Purposes* explicit.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - List of AR topics by week/lesson

This table shows the topical content of AR materials over the first semester.

Week #	Lesson #	Topic Area
1 & 2	1 & 2	Introduction to Reading
3	1 & 2	Stress; Whaling Ban; Malaria (AR Test & Feedback)
4	1	Vegetarianism
	2	Aeroplanes
5	1	Internet
	2	Wind Farms
6	1	Germanicus
	2	Consumer Purchasing (BIZ); Asteroids (ENG)
7	1 & 2	Late Motherhood; Urbanisation; Animal Conservation in Africa (AR Test & Feedback)
8	1	Building Design & Tourism
	2	Electronic Vehicles (ENG); Smoking Ban (BIZ) (Coursework)
9	1	(continued from week 8/2)
	2	Money & Auctions
10	1	Reading Skills
	2	DNA
11	1	Technology (ENG; Global Product (BIZ)
	2	Coffee
12	1 & 2	Obesity; Health Tourism; Environmental Health: Coral Reefs (AR Test & Feedback)

## Appendix 2 - BAWE Genre Families

The table below lists the thirteen genre families categorised in BAWE with the numbers of each that make up the ENG-BAWE and BE-BAWE corpora. Below the table I provide a brief explanation of three genres that are relevant to the discussion in chapter 5.

Genre Family	ENG-BAWE	BE-BAWE
Case Study	19	24
Critique	18	38
Design Specification	23	2
Empathy Writing	1	0
Essay	6	76
Exercise	8	9
Explanation	15	3
Literature Review	1	0
Methodology Recount	75	8
Narrative Recount	7	4
Problem Question	4	10
Proposal	4	2
Research Report	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>179</b>

**Methodology Recounts:** document ‘methods and conventions for recording experimental findings’ (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:40), in other words laboratory reports which are clearly comparable to the local ENG target writing (Table 5.10).

**Design Specifications:** for the ‘design [of] a product or procedure that could be manufactured or implemented’ (Nesi & Gardner, 2012:41). Examples include website design, building design and system design (Heuboeck et al, 2005:46).

**Problem Questions:** demonstrate application of theoretical methods to professional problem scenarios. Examples include law problem questions, logistics simulation and medical problems (Heuboeck et al, 2005:49).



## Appendix 3 - Email sent in search of positive data

E-mail sent in search of positive data:

**From:** Matthew Terrett

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 08, 2010 11:26 AM

**To:** XXX

**Subject:** EdD Research- data collection

Dear all,

As you are no doubt aware, changes to the EAP programme are currently being discussed and...[reference to institutional politics]...they are exploring precisely what *should be changed*, and therefore assume change is necessary.

I am, therefore, very interested in collecting your views on the positive aspects of the EAP programme (past & present) so that any proposed changes can be balanced against practices that are generally accepted.

I would be very interested to receive your positive views (via e-mail, through conversation or any other communicative channel you like) regarding the following broad areas:

- \* The structure and content of the EAP programme (and how it relates to the syllabus)
- \* The way that the EAP programme is managed/administrated
- \* The selection of topic content and classroom tasks for the 'exam practice approach' and the positive results of that approach
- \* The relative autonomy EAP enjoys and the benefits of using topics that are generally unrelated to subject study
- \* The portfolio and its effectiveness for fostering self-responsibility for learning
- \* The specific development of the students' academic literacy skills (e.g. text analysis & comprehension, genre recognition, appropriate written production skills, ability to deal with academic texts and tasks, vocabulary acquisition, etc.)

I am also very happy to receive your views on other related topics, but please keep them **positive**.

Thank you very much in anticipation of your help.

Mat

## Appendix 4 - Ethical Issues Agreement

Below is the Ethical Issues Agreement that was agreed at the meeting with the principal in 2010. The consent form for interviewees was essentially the same form which was signed by both participant teacher and me to acknowledge receipt and consent.

### EdD Ethical Issues Agreement

Mat Terrett

To whom it may concern,

I am currently engaged in research for a professional Doctorate in Education (EdD), the aim of which is to combine theory and practice in an investigation into academic literacy practices in the EAP department at [China Campus]. This will involve the collection, interpretation and analysis of substantial amounts of raw data. If successful, it will also result in any findings being made public.

This research is supported by [China Campus] but should any staff members decide not to participate, their decision will be respected.

The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that my research does not impact negatively in any way upon [China Campus] or the informants who participate in my research. In order to do this, for the duration of my research, I will undertake to guarantee that:

1. The institution and participants will be made anonymous in published material (i.e. material that is made public).
2. Participants will be given the opportunity to check the *accuracy* of any findings before they are published.

It is hoped that this research will positively help to develop [China Campus]'s EAP programmes, especially AW and AR since the focus is on academic *literacy*. As such, your participation and support is very much appreciated.

Thanks for your time,

Mat Terrett

## Appendix 5 - Head of Department's Email Briefing

Reproduced below is the email sent by the Head of Department, reinforcing the fact that my research was supported by the institution and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation (emboldened).

**From:** [Head of Department]  
**Sent:** 25 October 2010 15:21  
**To:** [EAP Teachers]  
**Subject:** Research within the EAP Department

Hello All,

As part of his PhD, Mat Terrett will be conducting some research within the EAP Department, part of **which will involve him requesting information from EAP staff. Participation in this is entirely on a voluntary basis** but I am sure Mat would appreciate as wide a range of input as possible.

Mat will be providing staff with a more detailed explanation of what his research entails in a follow up email.

Thanks,

[signed by Head of Department]

## Appendix 6 - Email to EAP teachers notifying them of my research

Reproduced below is the email sent out to EAP teachers (names removed for anonymity) with the ethical issues agreement as an attachment. I have emboldened the sentences of particular relevance to Ethical Issues.

**From:** Matthew Terrett  
**Sent:** 25 October 2010 15:26  
**To:** [EAP Department]  
**Subject:** RE: Research within the EAP Department

Dear all,

As most of you are already aware, I am now engaged in EdD research (professional doctorate). As such, I will be collecting data here in [China Campus]'s EAP department.

I am investigating the development of 'Academic Literacies' within the EAP department, which predominantly relates to our AW and AR programmes, and I am particularly interested in the following:

1. The tension between following the rules vs. acquiring independent/creative voice (in student writing)
2. Genre pedagogies
3. Insitutionalisation of literacy practices

I will be collecting evidence on various issues related to the above within the department (primarily through email, teaching materials and my own observations) and, at a later date, hope to carry out some interviews and possibly surveys. **Whilst this research is supported by SBC and is intended to help develop the EAP programme, I appreciate that not everybody will want to be involved (please let me know and your decision will be respected).** However, if you are interested please feel free to come and discuss any of the points above or e-mail me your views. I would also be happy to collaborate or discuss any related studies/research you are currently doing.

**I have attached a document about Ethical Issues which covers the privacy and confidentiality of informants.** I have also attached two files that provide more details about my research for anybody who is interested (be warned, some of it is rather lexically dense).

Finally, I would like to thank you in anticipation of your support for this research project.

Bw, Mat

## Appendix 7 - Email invitation to interview

The email below was sent out to managers for the first round of interviews. Subsequent emails were sent out individually to those who agreed to participate and to teachers who were selected on the basis of their particular interests in developing the programme. The same system was applied to the second round of interviewees.

Dear all,

I am hoping to hold a series of interviews to gather data for my research during December and the beginning of January.

The EAP Management Team represents the greatest source of information so I am especially keen to arrange interviews with you.

I appreciate that you are very busy, so in the first instance I would like to know who would be willing to attend an interview. Then we can arrange mutually convenient times on an individual basis.

I would like to make it clear that ***participation in these interviews is voluntary and that all information gathered will be kept confidentially and made anonymous*** prior to publication of findings. Furthermore, should any participant wish to amend or clarify comments made after the interview, such changes will be recorded.

The table below lists the topics I would like to discuss.

Historical contextual information, developmental factors & constraints on academic literacy practices at SBC, future goals. Consideration of appropriateness of genre pedagogies: SFL and/or ESP (ESAP).
Subject/Skills integration. Exploration of relevance of literacy pedagogies in Listening and note-taking practice.
Present development of Reading & Writing practice, analysis of rhetorical structures, follow models vs. creativity/development of own voice, genre pedagogies.
Historical contextual information, developmental factors & constraints on academic literacy practices at SBC. Influences of standardisation on departmental conventions. Dealing with students with different levels of ability.
Genre pedagogies and portfolio assessment. Academic Reading and vocabulary teaching.
Exploration of relevance of literacy in Listening & note-taking practice. Evaluation of written feedback for students.
Historical contextual information, developmental factors & constraints on academic literacy practices at SBC. Consideration of appropriateness of genre pedagogies: SFL and/or ESP (ESAP).

I would appreciate it if you could let me know whether or not you are willing to participate in the interviews.

Thanks,

Mat

## Appendix 8 - Transcription Key

This is the transcription key used to represent conventions of punctuation used to indicate in writing my understanding of the sense of the spoken words (see Halliday, 1989:90), as used in quotations from the interview data and teacher commentary that was documented through participant observation.

**Table - Transcription Key**

...	=	deleted text (i.e. conventional quotation usage)
[non-italic]	=	my additions or alterations for the purposes of making informational or grammatical sense for the reader (i.e. conventional quotation usage)
[ <i>italic</i> ]	=	non-verbal communication or other relevant external events
<i>italic</i>	=	words clearly and deliberately emphasised by teachers in interviews (these were also <i>italic</i> in the original transcript so there was no additional editing of the quotations in this respect)

## Appendix 9 - Sample Interview Schedule Questions

These are core questions and corresponding prompts compiled from different Interview Schedules. The actual questions varied dependent on participant and the prompts made assumptions on prior commentary by specific participants on specific issues. There was an additional column for my own note-taking commentary on the actual schedules.

Questions	Prompts
1. Could you describe the original structures of the EAP department and programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manager/coordinator positions</li> <li>• focus of AW, AR, portfolio &amp; ESAP (including content)</li> <li>• Where did the guidelines (what should be taught and how) come from?</li> <li>• What brought about the abandonment of ESAP?</li> <li>• When did the 'language' vs. 'skills' split occur?</li> </ul>
2. What brought about the 'exam practice approach'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the reasoning behind it? Was it a deliberate decision?</li> <li>• Has it ever been contested?</li> <li>• What was the rationale behind selected topics?</li> <li>• Has this had any impact on Ss literacy skills?</li> <li>• Has this had any impact on teaching practice?</li> <li>• Standardisation?</li> </ul>
3. What brought about the distinct, non-integrated skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the reasoning behind it? Was it a deliberate decision?</li> <li>• Supporting research?</li> <li>• What was the rationale behind selected topics?</li> <li>• Has this had any impact on Ss literacy skills?</li> <li>• Has this had any impact on teaching practice?</li> <li>• Has it ever been contested?</li> <li>• Standardisation?</li> </ul>
4. Could you tell me your views on the future direction of the EAP programme?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration, curriculum, materials (multimodality/visuals), assessments, <b>portfolio</b>, standardization, generic EAP conventions/subject-specific, genre pedagogies &amp; ESAP/ESP, needs analysis</li> <li>• Year 1, Year 2</li> </ul>



## Appendix 10 - Process of thematic coding and categorization of interview transcripts

Initial coded themes (first round of interviews).	Categories following analysis of second round of interviews.	Finalised categories
Local Management Politics/Interpersonal Relations	Local Management & Politics	Local Management
Modern Practice (teaching) Student-centredness Professional Development Demotivation (Teachers) Teacher Responsibility Teacher Confusion	Teachers' Professional Role & Professional Development	Professional Development [Excluded from this thesis]
Syllabus Development		
EAP Assessment Criteria EAP Exams (problems) Plagiarism Entry Tests (problems) Portfolio (problems) IELTS (test)	Assessment Problems	Assessment ←
Low level students Chinese Students Demotivation (students) Student Confusion	Low-level Chinese Students	Non- <i>gaokao</i> Students
Course book/textbook	Course book/textbook	Course book/textbook
EAP Programme Structure Exam Practice Approach Skills Practice vs Language Development Separate Skills Purpose/Purposeless Randomness	EPA Programme: Separateness Language & Skills: Separateness, Purposelessness, Randomness	Programme Structure: Separateness Separateness, Purposelessness, Randomness
Target Situation/University Study Transferability		
ESAP Inter-departmental Integration Irrelevance/Relevance	ESAP & Inter-departmental Integration	ESAP
Vocabulary		
Reading AWL Grammar	Vocabulary & Reading	Vocabulary & Reading Development
Materials Design	Materials Design & Development	Materials Design
Technological Resources Corpus Tools	Technological Resources	Technological Resources
Time Constraints	Time Constraints	Time Constraints
Genre Essay Report Conventions (academic writing) Rules (academic writing) Origins of Academic Style Creativity Voice & Ownership Sense of Audience	Academic Writing Conventions, Creativity & Genres	Academic Writing Conventions & Conflict (Assessment)
Listening & Speaking Film & Society		

Notes:

The coded themes from the first round of interviews are ordered here in such a way as to present the process of categorisation more clearly and are in no way ranked by quantity or relative importance of the themes. The grouping has been simplified for clarity (some codes from the first round, for example, were divisible and subsumed into different categories). Only those categories that remained significant following deletions requested as per Ethical Issues Agreement (Appendix 4) and were directly related to the research questions are presented in this thesis.

## Appendix 11 - Sample of interview transcript with coding mark-up

I have digitally reproduced my mark-up on this sample for clarity in black and white print; the two rounds of coding were originally undertaken by hand using coloured ink pens.

Genre (Essay)	Target Situation	Students	Academic (Purpose)	T1: Yeah, well <u>all the things that are genre-defining are themselves generic in that sense</u> , for example <i>Frankenstein</i> is not a gothic horror novel and yet it is the archetypal one at the same time.	Genre
				I: Yeah, so there's always that tension: you've got to stick to the rules in so far as people know what genre it <i>is</i> , but then you have to do something with it... But it doesn't seem to be on our programme as it is...	
				T1: I was just thinking it could be- I mean I've just started doing some <u>language testing examining</u> and there it talks about ' <u>appropriacy to the task</u> ' but it never actually defines what that means ' <u>the appropriacy</u> ', it's a bit tricky to...we know we can recognise it when we see it but we don't necessarily know- <u>I'm not sure we can necessarily sit down and write the rules for what tone would be appropriate in a lesson</u> . All we do is, really, academic essays...and if <u>we're preparing students for going to the UK</u> then why don't we teach them kind of how to write a letter and actually um- presumably they've been doing that at school, I mean that's what I did when I studied French, we'd always do different- <u>always writing for a purpose</u> , and you know I wonder whether they- whether our students wonder what is the purpose of this academic essay if it doesn't...[ <i>chuckling</i> ] I mean we don't ever explain it to them all that clearly. Obviously it's something they'll have to produce when they go to university in the UK...In the...actually it's something I was trying to... <u>all the materials I gave to students at first but it's just to basically get a score, just to pass a test and get a mark but the end goal</u> of it that it is about the creation of knowledge and actually about doing research and that kind of thing, and most of our students- yeah, they're probably not going to go and do that but unless they know that is the end...you know, that's where it comes from...that's the track its' on, then they probably don't understand why they're doing it at all. So all the things about academic honesty and that sort of thing doesn't seem <i>relevant</i> because why would you care about it if you weren't planning to uhm...	Assessment (problematised)
					Rules
					Target Situation
Academic (Purpose)	Students	Academic (Purpose)	Academic (Purpose)		Purpose (Essay)
					Materials
					Assessment (problematised)
					Purpose (Academic)
				I: Yeah, that's a key...the key is EAP, there is some <i>purpose</i> underlying it and if we don't make it explicit, that, in theory, can lead to confusion and I think there is quite a lot of evidence here, with our students, that it...it <i>does</i> lead to confusion...	
Academic (Purpose)	Students	Academic (Purpose)	Academic (Purpose)	T1: I suppose that's why we don't do things like writing that's not specifically an academic purpose but unless you have something which shows them what it is that you're <i>not</i> doing then they'll understand- you know sometimes you have to show them the other side of what they're doing so they can see what it is that they're actually being asked to do and put it into some kind of context. Otherwise it's just a kind of free-floating thing about 'you can't use a personal pronoun' or 'paraphrase here or paraphrase there and stick it all together and that's your essay!' [ <i>laughter</i> ]	Genre (awareness)
					Rules

## Appendix 12 - Survey Questions and Quantitative Responses

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A or not answered	Comments #
Academic writing does not use personal pronouns.	2	4	0	2	2	0	1
It may be useful to focus on pronoun usage in EAP classes	3	6	1	0	0	0	1
Formal conclusion paragraphs require a particular focus in EAP classes.	4	4	2	0	0	0	0
Explicit classroom instruction on the use of expressions like 'to conclude' and 'in conclusion' would be of use to EAP students.	4	3	2	1	0	0	1
'Language banks' of relevant vocabulary, language chunks and expressions would be a helpful pedagogical resource in the EAP classroom.	5	5	0	0	0	0	1
Images, graphical data, tables and formulae are often used in reading and writing material in the EAP classroom.	2	4	1	0	0	0	0
Language that EAP teachers instruct their students to use in their writing should also be explicitly modelled in the EAP reading materials.	3	5	2	0	0	0	3
Foundation level EAP courses and assessments should focus on general English (EGAP) rather than specific subject-related English (ESAP).	0	2	2	3	3	0	2
An IELTS style test is an appropriate method of assessment for EAP.	0	3	1	3	2	1	3
The EAP examinations could be abolished and EAP could be assessed on coursework components only. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with this statement.	0	4	0	2	2	2	3

# Appendix 13 - Images in EPA Materials

Reproduced below are the five images that occurred in the AR passages shown in their original context on the worksheets.

3.1 PREDICTION: Look at the illustration below and the words and phrases taken from the Reading Passage on the next page. With a partner if possible, try to predict exactly what is being discussed:



not only text links but also graphs, images and even video  
 potentially hazardous tool  
 all over the world  
 thousands of access  
 not owned or controlled by any one organisation  
 accessible for information  
 limited  
 young and old go connected  
 anyone can set up a site  
 educational phone  
 multimedia share the future...  
 latest technological revolution

3.2 PRE-READING QUESTIONS: Before reading the text on the following page, work with a partner and ask and answer the questions below. Base your answers on your possible knowledge of the topic:

- Have various ways in which people communicate with each other long distance.
- How do you think people might communicate with each other in the future?
- Do you use a computer? What do you use it for?
- Have you ever used the internet? What do you know about it?
- Why do you think some people fear the widespread use of the internet?
- How does one move the cursor around the screen of a computer monitor?

Next, reorder the words in the mystery questions below:  
 1. (get) need to internet what connected to do you?  
 2. (supplies) (informed) by (used) the is?

ACADEMIC READING Year 1 Term 1, week 10

3. The country's whole education system is going to be revamped; the curriculum will be revised, teachers will be re-trained, and many schools will be rebuilt or redecorated.  
 4. Most written examinations last between one and a half and three hours. However, some go on for four or even five hours without a break. This is not a good idea. Students during such a long stint students become mentally exhausted and unable to concentrate.  
 5. The new city colleges are intended to forge links between education and industry; it is vital to create these links if education is to meet industry's future needs.  
 6. Most of the arguments against examinations have been demolished as other means of assessment have proved even more unsatisfactory.  
 7. There was a plethora of suggestions for solving the problems of recruiting good students: exquisite at the meeting seemed to have ideas, and it was difficult to know where to begin.  
 8. The new teacher was unimpaired in his efforts to ensure that every student passed the course and he was prepared to work long hours providing extra tuition for any student who needed his help.  
 9. Many colleges have received less money from the government than they expected this year, as a result, some of them have curtailed their plans for expansion.  
 10. Most students have to spend a large amount of time reading in their subjects, therefore, the ability to read quickly is a major asset to study.

## ACTIVITY

A fact which refers to a diagram can help you to understand the meaning of several words at once

Tick any that you know:  
 (m) apple crank sprocket hub

Now read the following text. It contains the above words. Underline them and use them to label the diagram.  
 The cycle's feet press down on the pedals, which are attached to the chainwheel by two cranks, set at 180 degrees. The chainwheel is linked by the chain to a sprocket screwed on to the hub at the centre of the rear wheel. The hub is in turn joined to the rim of the wheel by 40 spokes.



## Discourse study: Comparing text structures

In this lesson we are going to compare two texts on the human genome project, to see how similar they are in terms of structure and the information they present. The Human genome project has been described as biology's first big science project.

### Task 1

Look at the first text. Try to answer the following questions:

- Which paragraph talks about 'how much' (cost) and 'how long' (duration)?
- Which paragraph has a definition? (Which words) is/are being defined?
- Which paragraph talks about who will use the information when the project is finished?
- What does the last paragraph talk about?



Text 1  
 It is the year 2050, and you are flicking through a booklet of advertisements for the latest gadgets, looking for a present for the friend who has everything. You spot it: a compact disc holding their complete genome - a personal record of the DNA that helps to mould their physical and mental characteristics.  
 Such a present might well be feasible by then, although for most people it would have value only as a novelty item. Even for the scientist, the genome of one individual would not be ideal. What medical science needs is a representative genome, the genetic equivalent of the deconstructed skeleton used to depict our anatomy based on DNA instead of bone.

Stretching over the next 15 years at least, the human genome project aims to produce just such a representative genome, from which geneticists will try to establish the differences between 'normal' and 'the norm'. Involving scientists from around the world, it is set to cost in the region of £2 billion. Compared with the huge amounts of money that governments have traditionally poured into physical science projects - £20 billion of the Space Station, for instance - the £2 billion price tag for knowing everything there is to know about the genetic make-up of homo sapiens seems modest.

Once completed, biochemists will use the sequencing information to plan novel genetically engineered organisms that can produce scarce, medically useful human proteins and hormones. Doctors and researchers will use the clues in our DNA to discover, diagnose, understand and treat human genetic diseases.

But making sense of this information will be a complicated task, partly because of the sheer quantity of data the project will churn out. The genome comprises 3500 million molecular groups known as bases, or nucleotides. These are known as A (adenine), T (thymine), C (cytosine) and G (guanine). Other arranged in sequences of three, called 'codons', which each nucleotide represents genes. These genes are arranged on chromosomes, of which each individual has 46 arranged in pairs. There are 23 distinct chromosomes, including the sex chromosomes.

Adapted from Wells, S. Making sense of the genome's secrets. New Scientist, 4 August 1990, p. 37

### Task 2

Now is the second text. Answer the following questions:

- Which paragraph describes other research?
- Which paragraph has a definition? Which word is being defined?

## Money



Cowrie sea shells (imgsrc - Wikipedia)

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, summed up the four chief qualities of money some 2,000 years ago. It must be lasting and easy to recognize, to divide, and to carry about. In other words it must be 'durable, distinct, divisible and portable'. When we think of money today, we picture it either as round, flat pieces of metal which we call coins, or as printed paper notes. But there are still parts of the world today where coins and notes are of no use. They will buy nothing, and a traveller might starve if he had none of the particular local 'money' to exchange for food. Among isolated peoples, who are not often reached by traders from outside, commerce usually means barter. There is a direct exchange of goods. Perhaps it is fish for vegetables, meat for grain, or various kinds of food in exchange for pots, baskets, or other manufactured goods. For this kind of simple trading, money is not needed, but there is often something that everyone wants and everybody can use, such as cattle, (by) food, shells for ornaments, or iron and copper to make into tools and vessels. These things - salt, shells or metals - are still used as money in out-of-the-way parts of the world today. Salt may seem rather a strange substance to use as money, but in countries where the food of the people is mainly vegetable, it is often an absolute necessity. Cakes of salt, stamped to show their value, were used as money in Tibet until recent times, and cakes of salt will still buy goods in Burma and parts of Africa. Cowrie sea shells have been used as money at some time or another over the greater part of the Old World. These were collected mainly from the beaches of the Maldives Islands in the Indian Ocean, and were traded to India and China. In Africa, cowries were traded right across the continent from East to West. Four or five thousand went for one Maria Theresa dollar, an Austrian silver coin which was once accepted as currency in many parts of Africa. Metal, valued by weight, preceded coins in many parts of the world. Iron, in lumps, bars or rings is still used in many countries instead of money. It can either be exchanged for goods, or made into tools, weapons or ornaments. The early money of China, apart from shells, was of bronze, often in flat, round pieces with a hole in the middle, called 'cash'. The earliest of these are between three thousand and four thousand years old - older than the earliest coins of the eastern Mediterranean. Nowadays, coins and notes have supplanted nearly all the more picturesque forms of money, and although in one or two of the more remote countries people still hoard it for future use on ceremonial occasions such as weddings and funerals, examples of primitive money will soon be found only in museums.

## NEW AGE TRANSPORT

Computerized design, advanced materials and new technologies are being used to produce machines of a type never seen before.



It looks as if it came straight from the set of Star Wars. It has four-wheel drive and rises above rocky surfaces. It lowers and raises its nose when going up and down hills. And when it comes to a river, it turns amphibious, two hydrojets power it along by blasting water under its body. There is room for two passengers and a driver, who sit inside a glass bubble operating electronic, aircraft-type controls. A vehicle for driving on land and water needs windscreen wipers - but it doesn't have any. Water molecules are disintegrated on the screen's surface by ultrasonic sensors.

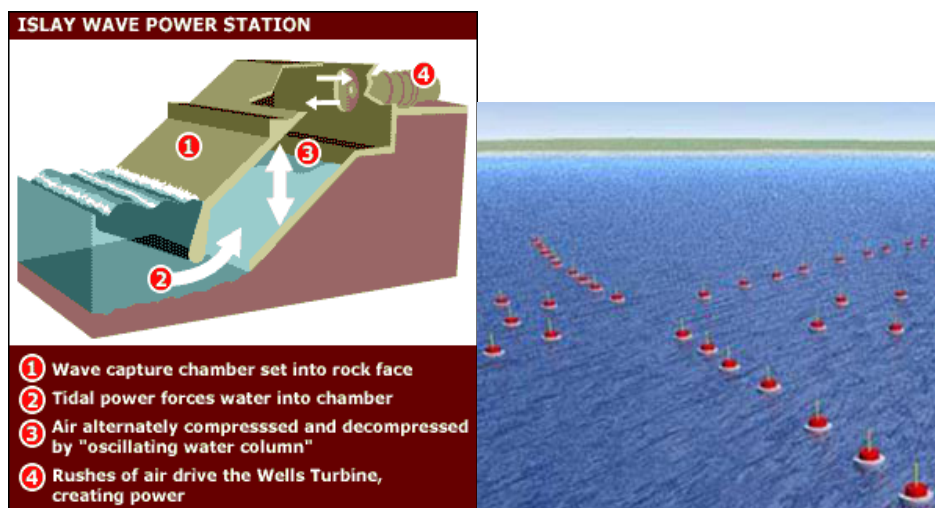
This unusual vehicle is the Racoon. It is an invention not of Hollywood but of Renault, a rather conservative French state-owned carmaker, better known for its family hatchbacks. Renault built the Racoon to explore new freedoms for designers and engineers created by advances in materials and manufacturing processes. Renault is rubbing about startlingly different cars, other products have radical new ideas for trains, boats and aeroplanes.

The first of the new freedoms is in design. Powerful computerized design (CAD) systems can replace with a click of a computer mouse hours of laborious work done on thousands of drawing boards. So new products, no matter how complicated, can be developed much faster. For the first time, Boeing will not have to build a giant replica of its new airliner, the 777, to make sure all the bits fit together. Its CAD system will take care of that.

But Renault is taking CAD further. It claims the Racoon is the world's first vehicle to be designed within the digitized world of virtual reality. Complex programs were used to simulate the vehicle and the terrain that it was expected to cross. This allowed a team led by Patrick Le Guement, Renault's industrial-design director, to 'drive' it long before a prototype existed.

Renault is not alone in thinking that virtual reality will transform automotive design. In Detroit, Ford is also investigating its potential. Jack Tamas, the firm's head of design, would like designers in different parts of the world to work more closely together, linked

Reproduced below are the image, diagram and table that featured in the AW coursework materials.



**Table 22.1 Banning smoking in the workplace: costs and benefits for employers and employees**

	£million per year
<b>Benefits</b>	
Fewer days lost through illness at work:	
passive smokers	70-140
smokers	340-680
Higher life expectancy	
passive smokers	21
smokers who reduce their smoking	550
smokers who give up altogether	1600
Safety benefits	64
Cost savings to NHS	-
Other benefits	140
Total benefits	2785-3195
<b>Costs</b>	
Lost output through smoking breaks	430
Consumer surplus lost	
smokers who reduce their smoking	155
smokers who give up altogether	550
taxes that would have been paid	1145
Total costs	2280
<b>Total net benefit</b>	505-915

## Appendix 14 - List of AW Lesson Content

The table below shows the content of AW lessons over the first semester as indicated by the local 'Scheme of Work' document and the AW materials.

Lessons #	Content
1	Academic Style and Passive Voice
2	Paragraph and Essay Structure
3	Essay Type: Process & Procedure Essay
4	Essay Type: Advantages and Disadvantages Essay
5	Error Correction, Essay Structure Review, Synonyms
6	Direct Quotation & In-text Referencing
7	Paraphrasing
8	Summarising
9	Signal Words, Cohesive Devices
10	Essay Type: Argumentative Essay
Additional Materials	There were also collections of 'Practice Timed-Essay Questions', 'Use of English Practice Materials' and over 38 worksheets for the portfolio (there were 38 Word Documents for use in semester one and several folders containing scans of textbooks or past portfolio work as samples).

### **Additional Information**

There were no specified schedules except that certain material needed to be covered before the assessed coursework was given to the students. Therefore, the precise sequence varied each year depending on the date the coursework was set. The sequence shown in the table was that followed in the final semester of the Exam-Practice Approach (2010-2011). Part of my own remit as Academic Writing Coordinator (2010) was to reorganise this material into modules or blocks of study. No records exist of semester two prior to my own influence but it contained lessons on graphs and charts, and covered the 'compare and contrast essay type'.

## Appendix 15 - KW lists

<b>Key:</b> Freq. = occurrences in EPA corpora (raw); % = frequency in EPA corpora per hundred words; RC. Freq. = occurrences in the BAWE corpora (raw).						
ENG vs ENG-BAWE						
N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	Distribution	Keyness
1	WOMEN	70	0.18	9	10	284.07
2	CHILDREN	62	0.16	9	19	247.43
3	PEOPLE	103	0.26	119	36	213.63
5	ECONOMIC	53	0.14	17	17	181.78
6	CENT	39	0.1	1	17	179.36
7	ELECTRIC	60	0.15	31	8	179.1
8	WORLD	77	0.2	89	38	159.63
9	YOU	70	0.18	74	19	152.72
11	CITIES	33	0.08	2	9	144.56
12	THEY	176	0.45	576	53	140.27
13	MEN	32	0.08	3	7	134.76
14	ARE	454	1.16	2,460	64	133.69
15	THEIR	148	0.38	461	48	126.28
17	WHO	73	0.19	114	35	124.03
18	FOOD	37	0.09	13	10	119.75
20	HTTP	23	0.06	0	14	111.17
21	COUNTRIES	45	0.11	38	21	110.16
22	SCHOOL	34	0.09	14	8	109.01
24	ELECTRICITY	40	0.1	32	9	100.41
25	SAYS	26	0.07	5	16	99.22
26	GOODS	28	0.07	8	8	98.7
27	FAMILY	32	0.08	15	12	98.62
28	FAMILIES	22	0.06	1	15	98.3
30	SOCIAL	33	0.08	19	17	94.79
31	HOME	37	0.09	29	16	93.75
33	BUT	150	0.38	579	56	92.31
35	YEARS	78	0.2	189	38	89.82
36	FISH	22	0.06	3	7	88.55
37	OR	200	0.51	923	55	87.19
39	MILLION	44	0.11	57	17	85
40	HEALTH	32	0.08	23	20	84.21
43	COUNTRY	23	0.06	7	17	79.88
46	MANY	88	0.22	277	42	73.96
47	WORKERS	30	0.08	26	8	72.52
50	ADAPTED	21	0.05	7	21	71.32
51	LIVING	24	0.06	13	12	70.46



53	ONLINE	20	0.05	6	11	69.7
57	OFTEN	43	0.11	79	26	64.27
63	SOURCE	38	0.1	64	31	60.94
65	LIVE	21	0.05	12	10	60.48
66	PRIVATE	21	0.05	13	10	58.7
72	OLD	24	0.06	21	15	57.75
73	MORE	166	0.42	844	54	57.63
74	PER	55	0.14	147	24	56.79
75	LAND	20	0.05	12	11	56.57
76	ABOUT	77	0.2	267	41	56.29
77	MONEY	34	0.09	55	12	56.24
78	HE	55	0.14	149	19	55.9
83	RENEWABLE	20	0.05	13	7	54.85
86	EUROPE	22	0.06	19	13	53.27
89	LOCAL	27	0.07	34	14	53.1
95	HOURS	26	0.07	33	14	50.88
96	GOVERNMENT	23	0.06	24	16	50.52
108	MEDICAL	21	0.05	21	9	47.2
110	CARS	46	0.12	125	10	46.58
115	LIKE	50	0.13	148	25	45.57
117	GO	31	0.08	59	19	44.96
119	HAVE	217	0.55	1,323	54	43.9
126	HIS	43	0.11	118	15	43.03
127	ENVIRONMENT	27	0.07	46	16	42.9
132	ACCESS	20	0.05	23	14	41.57
134	NEW	70	0.18	277	33	41.2
135	AGE	22	0.06	30	12	41.09
137	NOW	45	0.11	135	26	40.3
138	THAN	123	0.31	646	48	39.22
155	ENERGY	64	0.16	257	13	36.69
156	AND	1,106	2.82	9,290	66	36.57
160	PRICE	46	0.12	156	15	34.75
171	US	41	0.1	131	18	33.74
186	JUST	35	0.09	107	22	30.58
188	PAID	20	0.05	36	12	30.4
190	THERE	133	0.34	789	48	29.51
193	BETTER	39	0.1	133	17	29.22
206	ONE	110	0.28	618	52	28.98
207	SEVERAL	27	0.07	70	19	28.86
225	LONG	38	0.1	132	30	27.69
227	TRADE	23	0.06	54	7	27.36
242	USUALLY	21	0.05	48	13	25.67
244	HAS	163	0.42	1,062	59	25.58
253	LIFE	36	0.09	131	18	24.39
254	EVERY	27	0.07	81	17	24.18

293	EVEN	44	0.11	181	31	24.12
294	MAJOR	26	0.07	76	18	24.07

BIZ vs BE-BAWE						
N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	Distribution	Keyness
2	CHILDREN	61	0.15	14	19	212.56
4	WOMEN	72	0.18	37	10	200.74
7	MILLION	57	0.14	50	17	125.93
11	YOU	64	0.16	81	19	113.61
12	CENT	37	0.09	15	17	111.59
13	CITIES	31	0.08	8	9	105.3
14	FAMILIES	23	0.06	1	15	98.14
16	HTTP	24	0.06	2	14	97.19
18	PEOPLE	103	0.25	265	36	94.97
22	HEALTH	39	0.09	30	20	91.97
23	FISH	21	0.05	1	7	89.08
24	SAYS	30	0.07	13	16	88.6
25	YOUR	39	0.09	33	11	87.76
26	MANY	99	0.24	264	42	87.21
27	FAMILY	32	0.08	18	12	86.25
29	WWW	19	0.05	1	14	80.04
28	MEDICAL	19	0.05	1	9	80.04
30	FOOD	37	0.09	40	10	75.84
31	MEN	33	0.08	30	7	71.53
32	ARE	445	1.08	2,559	64	71.23
36	LIVE	23	0.06	10	10	67.85
41	SOURCE	41	0.1	61	31	64.71
42	OLD	24	0.06	14	15	63.78
44	WATER	22	0.05	11	13	61.92
50	HE	69	0.17	186	19	59.91
52	WHO	87	0.21	281	35	58.18
56	THEY	183	0.44	874	53	54.11
61	ADAPTED	21	0.05	16	21	49.74
67	OFTEN	50	0.12	128	26	46.36
71	ABOUT	77	0.19	266	41	46.04
72	LOCAL	35	0.09	65	14	45.79
74	HOME	31	0.08	52	16	44.39
78	ENERGY	20	0.05	19	13	42.32
79	OR	195	0.47	1,035	55	41.76
85	JOBS	25	0.06	35	10	41.3
86	COMPUTER	23	0.06	29	7	40.92
88	LIVING	26	0.06	40	12	39.97

90	SCHOOL	34	0.08	71	8	39.68
91	LIFE	44	0.11	116	18	39.31
92	YEARS	74	0.18	274	38	39.03
93	ONLINE	25	0.06	38	11	38.8
120	WORLD	74	0.18	296	38	33.47
121	HIS	51	0.12	168	15	33.02
137	JUST	38	0.09	107	22	31.11
138	BUT	139	0.34	728	56	31.09
146	THEIR	183	0.44	1,048	48	29.64
148	HAVE	236	0.57	1,438	54	29.27
149	PAID	24	0.06	48	12	29.25
152	GO	31	0.08	80	19	28.45
186	MOST	78	0.19	357	38	25.79
187	A	933	2.27	7,102	67	24.7
188	S	41	0.1	141	13	24.69

## Negative Keyword Lists

ENG vs ENG-BAWE					
N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	Negative Keyness
295	PROFIT	3		222	-24.14
296	CAN	130	0.33	2,025	-24.87
<b>297</b>	<b>SEEN</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>-25.64</b>
298	WERE	69	0.18	1,258	-26.36
299	ABOVE	5	0.01	286	-27.09
300	STEEL	9	0.02	368	-27.29
301	SPEED	8	0.02	354	-28.04
302	PROCESS	8	0.02	362	-29.18
303	FOLLOWING	4	0.01	291	-31.39
304	MASS	5	0.01	314	-31.4
305	THEN	30	0.08	755	-31.47
306	<b>I</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>-32.01</b>
307	FACTOR	3		289	-35.1
308	ORDER	11	0.03	467	-35.77
309	APPLIED	3		294	-35.93
310	IS	597	1.52	7,804	-37.13
311	MAXIMUM	4	0.01	327	-37.2
<b>312</b>	<b>TABLE</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>-37.53</b>
<b>313</b>	<b>MODEL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>-39.55</b>
314	POINT	5	0.01	370	-40.25
315	REQUIRED	3		343	-44.18
316	DUE	11	0.03	531	-44.95
317	SYSTEM	25	0.06	791	-45.25
318	STRESS	8	0.02	478	-46.48

<b>319</b>	<b>SHOWS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>-49.59</b>
320	SURFACE	3		387	-51.69
321	SECTION	3		388	-51.86
322	PERFORMANCE	3		394	-52.89
323	DESIGN	22	0.06	809	-54.43
<b>324</b>	<b>SHOWN</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>-56.71</b>
325	OUTPUT	4	0.01	466	-60.39
<b>326</b>	<b>THEREFORE</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>-61.43</b>
327	USING	23	0.06	886	-62.33
328	LOAD	3		478	-67.46
329	ANALYSIS	4	0.01	509	-67.73
330	FORCE	8	0.02	644	-72.81
<b>331</b>	<b>FIGURE</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>531</b>	<b>-76.74</b>
<b>332</b>	<b>DATA</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>-81.37</b>
333	USED	33	0.08	1,213	-81.64
<b>334</b>	<b>VALUE</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>-81.97</b>
335	MATERIAL	3		588	-86.8
336	PRESSURE	3		596	-88.22
337	WAS	139	0.35	3,081	-102.79
<b>338</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>-106.46</b>
339	THIS	156	0.4	3,811	-152.09
340	BE	226	0.58	4,898	-156.74
<b>341</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>15,762</b>	<b>-325.7</b>
342	THE	2,351	5.99	35,153	-389.74

BIZ vs BE-BAWE					
<b>N</b>	<b>Key word</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>RC. Freq.</b>	<b>Negative Keyness</b>
194	EXCHANGE	8	0.02	294	-24.58
195	CHANGE	15	0.04	415	-25.98
196	THEORY	4		232	-26.47
197	SHARE	3		212	-26.62
198	E	10	0.02	345	-27.27
199	PROFIT	4		240	-27.87
<b>200</b>	<b>VALUE</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>-27.89</b>
201	AS	302	0.73	3,703	-27.92
202	GROWTH	37	0.09	748	-29.14
203	MANAGEMENT	12	0.03	394	-29.71
204	FINANCIAL	5	0.01	277	-30.82
205	DEMAND	16	0.04	473	-31.98
206	RISK	4		264	-32.14
207	CASE	8	0.02	350	-33.55
208	RATES	5	0.01	296	-34.14
209	FIRMS	12	0.03	428	-34.87
<b>210</b>	<b>DATA</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>-35.37</b>

<b>211</b>	<b>THUS</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>-38.76</b>
212	UNEMPLOYMENT	5	0.01	350	-43.78
213	INCREASE	19	0.05	609	-44.86
214	STRATEGY	5	0.01	357	-45.05
215	FIRM	4		335	-45.11
216	P	8	0.02	426	-46.35
<b>217</b>	<b>THEREFORE</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>-46.41</b>
218	INVESTMENT	5	0.01	377	-48.69
219	PRODUCTION	7	0.02	426	-49.85
220	PERIOD	6	0.01	411	-50.92
<b>221</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>-50.97</b>
222	BE	236	0.57	3,430	-56.87
223	MARKET	47	0.11	1,122	-57.76
224	LEVEL	13	0.03	606	-60.71
225	POLICY	5	0.01	470	-65.98
226	THE	2,447	5.95	26,118	-66.47
227	CAPITAL	4		462	-69.14
228	THIS	173	0.42	3,007	-84.94
229	PROJECT	12	0.03	758	-90.42
230	RATE	9	0.02	700	-91.62
<b>231</b>	<b>MODEL</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>794</b>	<b>-134.38</b>
<b>232</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>2.05</b>	<b>11,261</b>	<b>-135.15</b>

## Appendix 16 - AW Teaching Material

The text from two highly influential worksheets is reproduced below- Academic Style (the Rules) and Signal Words. Formatting is minimal as it would have been on the original worksheet but the exact style, layout and formatting has been adjusted.

### Academic Style (the Rules)

#### What is Academic Style?

Written English, like spoken English, may be formal or informal.

Academic writing is:

- > Formal - it uses passive verb forms, it doesn't use informal words or phrases, personal pronouns, emotional language, Chinglish or slang
- > Cautious - it uses hedging and generalisations which must be supported by references
- > The writing will vary according to the particular type; for example, essays and reports.

#### Rules for academic style.

Academic style is formal.

##### 1. It doesn't use informal words or phrases

- > don't, can't = do not, cannot.
- > like = such as, for instance, for example
- > thing, nothing, something = factor, issue or topic.
- > lots of, more and more = a significant/considerable number, increasing/growing numbers of
- > little, big = small, large.
- > get better/worse = improve/deteriorate.
- > What's more = in addition, furthermore, additionally, moreover
- > etc., and so on = do not use them. Instead list the items and use 'and' before the last item:  
e.g. The most common forms of public transport include buses, trains and subways.
- > go on, bring up = continue or raise.

##### 2. It doesn't use personal pronouns

E.g. I, you, he, she, we, they.

They enjoy travelling by car. = Travelling by car is enjoyable.

##### 3. It doesn't use emotional language.

Do not use words that show strong emotion: luckily, remarkably, surprisingly, beautiful, wonderful

##### 4. It doesn't use Chinglish or Cliches. E.g. Every coin has two sides, in a word, last but not least

##### 5. It doesn't use slang. E.g. dad, guy, gonna, wanna = father, man, going to, want to

Academic writing is usually impersonal and formal.

This means that academic writing avoids words like:

*I, me, we, and you.*

It also means that we try to avoid writing things like:

*Most people think/believe*

Using the passive can lead to more impersonal writing, because sentences written in the passive do not need to make clear who does the action. The passive is also considered more formal.

The following sentences demonstrate how to use the passive to improve academic style in your essays.

**Examples:**

**a. Original:** Most people believe that there are both advantages and disadvantages to living abroad.

**Better:** It is widely believed that there are both advantages and disadvantages to living abroad.

**b. Original:** Some people argue that the most important effect of industrialization is pollution.

**Better:** It is argued that the most important effect of industrialization is pollution.

**c. Original:** Most people agree that the advantages of studying English outweigh the disadvantages.

**Better:** It is generally agreed that the advantages of studying English outweigh the disadvantages.

**d. Original:** Almost everyone thinks that saving money has few disadvantages.

**Better:** It is almost universally held that saving money has few disadvantages.

## Signal Words

Signal Words show the relationship between sentences or ideas in an essay. Used correctly they make your writing clearer and easier to follow. Below are some commonly used transitional expressions.

To add an idea- *In addition, furthermore, also, moreover, besides, additionally*

Example:

Looking for a job is a time consuming process; furthermore, due to the cost of transportation, printing and postage, it can be expensive.

To show time order- *first, second, third, next, then, last, finally*

Example:

First, I had to take a bus to the airport. Next, I boarded a plane for Thailand. Then, I took a taxi from Bangkok to the bus station. Finally, I caught a bus from there to the resort where I was staying.

To contrast- *however, in contrast, on the other hand, nevertheless*

Example:

In my view, getting married in one's early twenties is a recipe for divorce as people in general are not mature enough at that age for such a commitment; however, for a small minority of people, an early marriage is a good idea.

To show result- *Accordingly, hence, thus, as a result, therefore, consequently*

Example:

Studies show that children are spending more and more of their leisure time watching T.V. and playing computer games. Consequently, the number of overweight children has increased in recent years.

To emphasize- *in fact, indeed, certainly*

Example:

Due to ever increasing competition the number of skills needed by graduates to secure a good job increases every year; indeed, many graduates speak English and one other language, as well as having work experience.

To show an example- *for example, for instance, in particular*

Example:

Living in a dormitory is very convenient for most students, in my opinion. For example, they do not have to worry about making friends or paying bills.

To conclude- *in conclusion, in summary, in general, in short*

Example:

First impressions are often wrong because people usually make judgments on the basis of superficial things such as clothing, physical appearance and grooming. In summary, because of this, I think it is best not to judge peoples' characters too quickly.



## Appendix 17 - Example of Rhetorical Functions Identification Process

The table below is copied from Alexander et al's (2008) *EAP Essentials to principles and practice*, p.51. It is part of a table providing a demonstration for EAP teachers intending to teach rhetorical functions.

Organization of the text	Annotated text
Background to the problem	Edinburgh is <u>one of the most</u> [comparison] beautiful cities in Europe with a city centre which <u>has retained</u> much of its <u>original</u> [development] splendour.
Problem	However [contrast], it <u>suffers</u> [problem] <u>increasingly</u> [change] from traffic <u>congestion</u> [problem].
One cause of the problem	<u>Although</u> [contrast] the population has remained <u>relatively stable</u> , [change] the use of private vehicles <u>has doubled</u> [change] over the last twenty years.
One effect of the problem	The volume of traffic along its narrow streets <u>is beginning</u> [change] to <u>damage</u> [problem] the foundations of some of the ancient buildings that give the city its <u>unique</u> [comparison] character.

## Appendix 18 - List of Rhetorical Functions identified in AR Passages

The following is a list of the organisation of academic reading passages using Alexander et al's (2008) method of classifying rhetorical functions. A function is attributed to each paragraph of text and, where this includes multiple sub-functions, these are given in parentheses. The + designates the division between paragraphs. Where the text is not formatted in paragraphs (e.g. as a list) this is also indicated in parentheses. I have indicated (using <sup>AW</sup>) where introductions or concluding paragraphs match the rhetorical functions taught in Academic Writing.

Rhetorical Functions	# of texts
Introduction (Definition, Explanation, Example) + Explanation + Example	5
Introduction (Explanation) + Explanation (Instruction, List format)	3
Explanation (Instruction, List format)	3
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Definition + Explanation + Explanation/Example + Conclusion <sup>AW</sup> (Restatement of Thesis &/or Summary &/or Prediction)	3
Introduction (Background, Explanation, Comparison) + Explanation + [multiple Explanation paragraphs]	3
Introduction (Background, Explanation) + Explanation + [multiple Explanation paragraphs]	3
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Explanation + Explanation/Example + Conclusion (Summary of text content)	2
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Definition + Explanation + Explanation/Example	2
Introduction (Hook) + Example + Further Hook + Explanation (Background) + Explanation + Example	2
Heading + Explanation (Background) + [multiple Headings and Explanation paragraphs]	2
Introduction (Definition, Explanation, Example) + Explanation + Example + Persuasion (Argument)	1
Introduction (Background, Example) + Prediction + Example + Explanation + Prediction + Explanation (Further Details)	1
Introduction (Background, Explanation) + Explanation + [multiple Explanation paragraphs] + Conclusion (Prediction)	1
Introduction (Persuasion) + Clarification + Explanation + Example + [multiple Explanation/Example paragraphs]	1
Abstract/Introduction (Summary of text content) + Introduction (Background) + Explanation/Persuasion (Argument) + Conclusion (Summary of text content & author's comment)	1
Introduction (Background, Argument) + Persuasion (Argument: Claim & Rebuttal) + [multiple Persuasion paragraphs] + Conclusion (Argument)	1
Introduction (Background, Argument) + Persuasion (Argument: Claim & Rebuttal) + [multiple Persuasion paragraphs]	1

Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Definition, Thesis Statement) + Description (Narrative) + [multiple Narrative paragraphs]	1
Introduction (Hook) + Example + Further Hook + Explanation (Background, Definition, Statistics) + Explanation + Example	1
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Persuasion (Problem) + Prediction + Comparison	1
Introduction (Background, Argument) + Persuasion (Argument) + Explanation + [multiple Persuasion/Explanation paragraphs]	1
Introduction (Background) + Thesis Statement + Background + Summary + Persuasion (Problem) + Explanation (further details)	1
Introduction (Hook) + Persuasion (Problem) + Persuasion (Background, Solutions) + Statistics + Persuasion (further details) + Persuasion (Prediction, Solutions)	1
Introduction (Hook) + Persuasion (Problem) + Explanation (Causes) + [multiple Explanation paragraphs] + Prediction	1
Introduction (Hook) + Persuasion (Problem) + Explanation (Causes) + [multiple Explanation paragraphs]	1
Introduction (Background) + Explanation (Cause and Effect) + Persuasion (Problem, Causes) + Explanation (Effects) + Prediction (Listed)	1
Introduction (Background) + Explanation (Cause and Effect) + Persuasion (Problem, Causes) + Explanation (Effects)	1
Introduction (Background) + Persuasion (Problem) + Example + Explanation (Causes)	1
Introduction (Background, Thesis Statement) + Explanation (Effects) + [multiple Explanation paragraphs] + Conclusion <sup>AW</sup> (Summary of text content, author's opinion)	1
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Persuasion (Problem, Statistics) + Statistics + Persuasion (Problem: further details) + Persuasion (Prediction, Solutions)	1
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Explanation/Persuasion (Causes, Argument) + Conclusion (Author's opinion)	1
Introduction (Hook, Description) + Background + Example + [multiple Example paragraphs]	1
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Example + Application + [multiple Example-Application paragraphs] + Conclusion	1
Introduction (Background, Thesis Statement) + Statistics + Explanation/Description + [multiple Explanation/Description paragraphs] + Persuasion (Problem) + Conclusion (Narrative)	1
Introduction (Background, Thesis Statement) + Statistics + Explanation/Description + [multiple Explanation/Description paragraphs] + Persuasion (Problem) + Explanation (Effects) + Example	1
Introduction (Hook, Problem) + Explanation (Cause, Effect) + Persuasion (Solution, Problem) + Persuasion (Prediction, Solution) + Example	1
Introduction (Hook, Background, Example) + Explanation + Persuasion/Explanation (Problem) + [multiple Explanation paragraphs]	1
Introduction <sup>AW</sup> (Background, Thesis Statement) + Explanation (Benefits) + Explanation + Explanation (Causes) + Statistics	1
Introduction (Thesis Statement) + Explanation (Benefits) + Persuasion (Problem, Effects) + Explanation (Benefits) + Example + Explanation (Statistics) + [multiple Explanation/Statistics paragraphs]	1
<b>Total number of different text organisations revealed by analysis of rhetorical functions = 39</b>	
<b>Total = 57</b>	

**Note:** There are more reading passages than those used to construct the EPA corpus because the list above includes those texts that were excluded from the Key Word Analysis (see §3.6.3.4), most notably the six texts of listed instructional material.

## Appendix 19 - Sample of rhetorical functions mark-up in an AR passage

The passage below has been reformatted for the purpose of displaying my rhetorical functions mark-up. The rhetorical functions are underlined and my own annotations are written in italics in parentheses, following Alexander et al (2008:51-52). On the original worksheets I used ink pen and noted my annotations in the margins. This sample exemplifies the one of the most common organisational structures in the AR passages (see Appendix 19), which is consistent with the rhetorical functions expected in China Campus' BIZ disciplinary writing (Definition + Explanation + Example), see §4.4.

### Habit and learning in consumer purchasing

Introduction (Definition, Explanation, Example)	Habit <u>is</u> [Definition] repetitive behaviour resulting when the consumer fails to seek information on or evaluation of alternatives. Habit <u>leads to</u> [Explanation: extending definition] an almost automatic response when a need arises, resulting in the repetitive purchase of the same brand. <u>For example</u> [Example], a consumer who is out of stomach tablets buys the same brand with little thought or information search. The only elements in buying by habit <u>are</u> [Explanation] need arousal, purchase and post-purchase evaluation. <u>Thus</u> [Concluding explanation/definition], habit <u>is</u> [Explanation: extending definition] the simplest purchasing process.
Explanation (Definition, Explanation)	Both inertia and brand loyalty <u>are classified as</u> [Definition] habit. With brand loyalty, the consumer <u>is</u> committed to a favoured brand, and <u>is willing to</u> [Definition] go elsewhere <u>if</u> [Conditional] a store does not have it. With inertia, there <u>is no</u> commitment or strongly favourable attitude towards a brand [Definition]. <u>If a store is out of stock</u> [Explanation/Unspecific example], the consumer will just buy an alternative brand. With brand loyalty, the consumer <u>tries to optimise</u> his or her satisfaction; with inertia, the consumer is quick to <u>accept</u> second best [Explanation: compare/contrast].
Explanation (Definition, Explanation: Problem/ Results)	Both brand loyalty and inertia <u>are a result of</u> [Explanation: Results] consumer learning. Learning <u>is</u> [Definition] a change in behaviour occurring as a result of past experience. As consumers <u>gain experience</u> in purchasing and consuming products, <u>they learn</u> what brands they like and do not like and the features they like most in brands [Explanation]. They <u>then adjust</u> [Explanation: Developing] future behaviour based on past experience. Learning may result in reinforcement, which <u>is</u> [Definition] continued satisfaction with a brand as a result of repeated usage <u>leading to</u> [Result] an increased likelihood the brand will be purchased again. But learning can <u>also result in</u> [Result] extinction, <u>which is</u> [Definition] the elimination of expected satisfaction with a brand. Extinction <u>can occur</u> fairly quickly <u>if</u> consumers are <u>no longer</u> satisfied with their usual brand [Conditional Problem]. Extinction <u>leads to</u> [Result] a process of decision making in which the consumer begins to evaluate other brands. Thus, <u>not only can</u> decision making <u>lead to</u> habit <u>when</u> the consumer is satisfied, habit <u>can lead back to</u> decision making <u>when</u> the consumer is dissatisfied [Explanation: comparison of conditionals].
Example (Explanation, Change, Problem, Result)	<u>Consider</u> an American <u>consumer who has bought</u> Coca-Cola since he was a teenager [Example]. <u>Every purchase</u> of Coke <u>reinforced</u> his satisfaction with the brand, so today, when he wants a soft drink he <u>automatically thinks of</u> Coke [Explanation]. Now, assume our consumer buys Coke after the company <u>decided to change</u> [Change] the formula. He <u>decides</u> he does <u>not like</u> the new taste because it is <u>too</u> sweet [Change: Problem]. Extinction <u>has taken place because</u> the expected satisfaction has <u>not occurred</u> [Explanation: Example/Change related to previous Definition]. The consumer <u>is now faced with a</u> <u>decision</u> [Result] as to which soft drink to try next.

Explanation (Definition, Example)	<p>Marketers <u>often use</u> learning <u>theory</u> by repetitively <u>linking</u> their brand to a particular stimulus in advertising [<i>Explanation: theory and practice</i>]. <u>If</u> the marketing <u>is</u> successful, conditioning has taken place [<i>Explanation: conditional</i>]. Conditioning <u>is</u> [<i>Definition</i>] the link between the brand and a stimulus in the consumer's mind so that just seeing the stimulus will evoke an awareness of the brand. A good <u>example is</u> [<i>Example</i>] the longest running advertising campaign to date, the Marlboro cowboy campaign. <u>Whether</u> one believes that cigarette advertising <u>is or is not ethical</u> [<i>Problem</i>], it is generally recognised that the campaign has been the <u>most successful</u> in advertising history [<i>Example: introduction/background</i>].</p>
Example (Background: Problem- Solution)	<p>In the <u>mid-1950s</u>, Marlboro <u>was</u> languishing as a prestige-oriented brand targeted to light smokers [<i>Background</i>]. Philip Morris, the company which owns Marlboro, needed to <u>revitalise</u> the brand and decided to <u>use</u> the image of a cowboy to target the heavy-smoking males [<i>Background: Solution</i>].</p>
Example (Background: Solution, Result)	<p>The <u>repetitive use</u> of the cowboy was so <u>successful</u> that consumers have become conditioned to associate Marlboro with cowboys [<i>Background: Solution</i>]. Since the cowboy image is <u>associated with</u> a positive image of masculinity and assertiveness among many male smokers, the positive association was also <u>transferred to</u> the brand [<i>Explanation</i>]. The <u>worth today</u> [<i>Result</i>] is conservatively estimated to be in the billions of dollars for Philip Morris</p>
	<p>Assael et al Marketing Principles and Strategy, 1995 source: Focusing on IELTS, P.Gould &amp; M.Clutterbuck</p>

## Appendix 20 - AW Materials: Rhetorical Functions of an Essay

The worksheet reproduced below has been reformatted for inclusion in this appendix. This worksheet was from the first few weeks of the academic year and provides the functional organization for an essay. The numbers of 'body paragraphs' provided on such worksheets varied throughout the programme, so the Exam-Practice Approach Academic Writing convention was more flexible than a 'five-paragraph' essay.

### The Function of Essay Parts

Task 1: Match the components of an essay with their functions below by writing the correct number next to the letter.

For example (a) \_3\_ or (f) \_4\_

- (a) \_\_\_\_ Introduction - 1 (usually short) paragraph
- (b) \_\_\_\_ Background information - usually around 2-3 sentences
- (c) \_\_\_\_ Thesis statement - 1 sentence
  
- (d) \_\_\_\_ Body paragraph 1 - 1 paragraph
- (e) \_\_\_\_ Topic sentence 1 - 1 sentence
- (f) \_\_\_\_ Supporting sentences 1 - usually around 5 - 6 sentences
  
- (g) \_\_\_\_ Body paragraph 2 - 1 paragraph
- (h) \_\_\_\_ Topic sentence 2 - 1 sentence
- (i) \_\_\_\_ Supporting sentences 2 - usually around 5 - 6 sentences
  
- (j) \_\_\_\_ Conclusion - 1 (usually short) paragraph
- (k) \_\_\_\_ Restatement of thesis - 1 sentence
- (l) \_\_\_\_ Summary of main points made - usually around 2-3 sentences

1. Reminds the reader of what he or she has read, and which points are the most important
2. Gives support to your second topic sentence; giving further information, details and examples
3. Develops your thesis with your first set of important ideas
4. Summarizes the most important points made in the body paragraphs
5. Introduces the reader to the general topic of your essay
6. Tells the reader what the main idea of your first paragraph is about
7. Tells the reader the main idea of your essay
8. Develops your thesis with your second set of important ideas
9. Gives support to your first topic sentence; giving further information, details and examples
10. Expresses the essay's main ideas again, though in different words
11. Tells the reader what the main idea of your second paragraph is about
12. Tells the reader that the essay is about



## Appendix 21 - Faculty rating of negative KWs

The tables below show the importance rating that two members of the relevant faculty ascribed to the list of negative keywords excluding function words (i.e. verbs and prepositions) and words already analysed in other categories/sections of chapter 5.

Negative KWs (ENG)	Importance ascribed to each word by two members of ENG faculty (0= not selected; 1= one member of faculty; 2= both members of faculty)				
	Not important	Less than average importance	Average importance	Quite important	Extremely important
Profit	0	2	0	0	0
Steel	0	1	1	0	0
Speed	0	0	1	1	0
Process	0	0	0	2	0
Mass	0	0	0	1	1
Factor	0	0	1	0	1
Order	0	0	0	1	1
Applied	0	0	0	0	2
Maximum	0	0	0	0	2
Model	0	0	0	0	2
Point	0	0	1	1	0
Required	0	0	1	1	0
Due	0	1	0	0	1
System	0	0	0	1	1
Stress	0	0	0	1	1
Surface	0	0	0	2	0
Section	0	0	2	0	0
Performance	0	0	1	1	0
Design	0	0	0	0	2
Output	0	0	0	1	1
Load	0	0	1	0	1
Analysis	0	0	0	0	2
Force	0	0	0	1	1
Data	0	0	0	0	2
Value	0	0	0	0	2
Material	0	0	0	1	1
Pressure	0	0	0	0	1
Results	0	0	0	0	1

Negative KWs (BIZ)	Importance ascribed to each word by two members of BIZ faculty (0= not selected; 1= one member of faculty; 2= both members of faculty)				
	Not important	Less than average importance	Average importance	Quite important	Extremely important
Exchange	0	1	0	1	0
Change	0	0	1	1	0
Theory	0	0	1	1	0
Share	0	1	0	1	0
Profit	0	0	0	0	2
Value	0	0	1	1	0
Growth	0	0	0	2	0
Management	0	0	1	1	0
Financial	0	0	1	1	0
Demand	0	0	0	0	2
Risk	0	1	1	0	0
Case	1	1	0	0	0
Rates	0	1	1	0	0
Firm(s)	0	0	0	1	1
Data	0	0	1	1	0
Unemployment	0	0	0	2	0
Increase	0	0	1	0	1
Strategy	0	0	2	0	0
Investment	0	0	0	2	0
Production	0	0	0	2	0
Period	1	1	0	0	0
Market	0	0	0	0	2
Level	0	0	1	1	0
Policy	0	0	2	0	0
Capital	0	0	0	0	2
Project	0	0	2	0	0
Rate	0	1	0	1	0
Model	0	0	2	0	0



